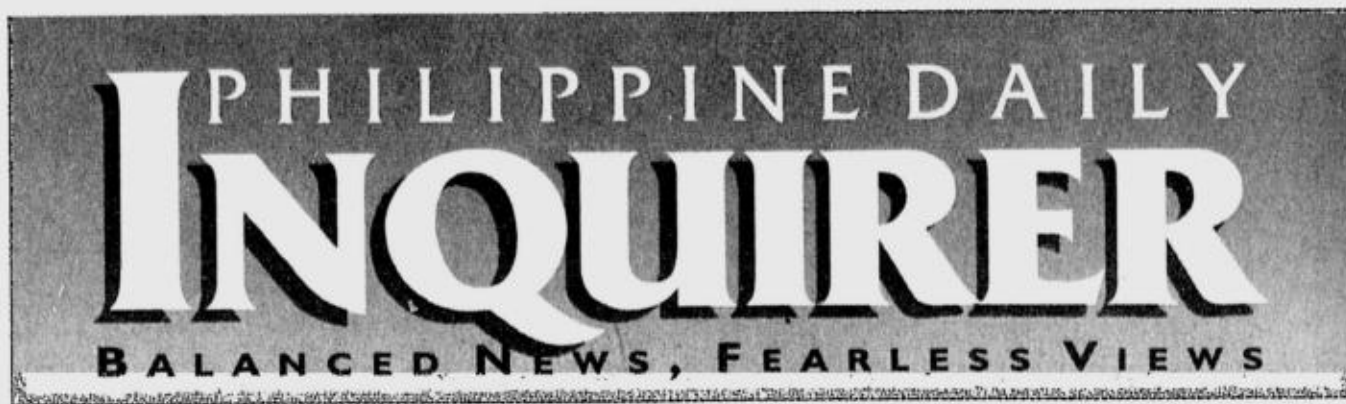


WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Saddam to stay until end**
WORLD/A10
- **Power shortage seen**
hitting Visayas area
BUSINESS/B1
- **US military assistance**
to RP to total \$78M
NEWS/A2



Edong does a Gloria

By R. Nazareno and C. S. Batino
OPPOSITION Sen. Edgardo Angara's recent meetings with President Macapagal-Arroyo may be rubbing off on him. Angara did a Ms Macapagal when he announced yesterday
EDONG/A13



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P15

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Bro. Mike forming nat'l unity coalition

Business, labor, religious groups joining alliance

PAGDANGANAN

JESS YUSON

Palace defends Obet as DAR chief

By Carlito Pablo, Gerald G. Lacuarta and Juliet Labog-Javellana

MALACAÑANG yesterday found itself defending the appointment of former Bulacan Gov. Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan as agrarian reform secretary amid criticisms that he was one of the administration's "recycled officials."

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the appointment of Pagdanganan, a twice-defeated senatorial aspirant, was a "presidential prerogative."

Pagdanganan will assume the top post in the Department of Agrarian Reform on Jan. 20, replacing Hernani Braganza, who has been appointed press secretary.

Told that the former three-term governor had no track record in agrarian reform advocacy, Bunye said: "The President chooses them (her officials) based on their perceived ability to implement her programs."

Bunye described the latest Cabinet recruit as a "very capable and honest person."

While waiting for the one-year ban on the appointment of losing senatorial candidates, Pagdanganan was named presidential adviser on cooperatives. He served as chair of the Cooperative Development Authority.

He accepted the DAR post after talking to President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday morning. Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo had talked to him about the job last week.

Pagdanganan said he accepted the post because he felt that he was not new to the farmers' sector. "I'm hoping I would be able to

PALACE/A4

By Gil Cabacungan and Blanche S. Rivera

TO the growing list of national leaders disgusted with politics, add the name of erstwhile political king-maker Mike Velarde.

Velarde, the spiritual leader of the vote-rich El Shaddai prayer group, said yesterday he was organizing a Coalition for National Unity, with the active participation of the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference and Bishop Erano Manalo, spiritual leader of the Iglesia ni Cristo, to push a non-partisan national agenda.

Velarde, known to millions of El Shaddai members as "Brother Mike," said that at the coalition's launch tomorrow, there will be no politicians in attendance.

He told the INQUIRER that he was fed up with politicians, their empty promises and their bickering. These have only divided the nation and distracted the country from addressing its more serious problems, particularly the economy, he said.

Velarde said his fellow organizers deliberately left out politicians from the invite list to show that "we really mean business."

The coalition is an alliance of business, labor and religious groups that have agreed to join hands to help lift the economy, he said. It is the silent majority's response to the failure of political leaders to lead the country out of the economic rut, he added.

One major development: the moderate Trade Union Congress of the Philippines, along with a broad bloc of labor groups, will join the coalition, together with the Employers Confederation of the Philippines and the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

TUCP spokesperson Alex Aguilar said the alliance was created to draft a common agenda for national unity and urge politicians to stop being so absorbed in their election ambitions for 2004.

"Year 2003 is not the time to bring out our swords and have

BRO.MIKE/A4



MEMBERS of the Cabinet of deposed President Joseph Estrada and other witnesses take their oath before the Senate committee on government corporations and public enterprises. From left: former Napocor president Federico Puno, former Justice Secretary Artemio Tuquero, former Energy Secretary Mario V. Tiaoqui, former Neda chief Felipe Medalla, former Trade Secretary Jose Pardo, former Assistant Finance Secretary Juan Jose Rodom Fetiza, former Finance Undersecretary Lily Gruba and BSP legal counsel Juan de Zuñiga Jr.

JESS YUSON

Erap 'bombshells' expected in Senate testimony today

By Dona Pazzibugan and Rocky Nazareno

AT LEAST 500 policemen will secure deposed President Joseph Estrada when he finally testifies before the Senate today on the controversial \$450-million Impsa power contract.

But the security work for the "bombshells" Estrada is expected to detonate was already in high gear yesterday, with three top administration officials doing the defusing.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez, Justice Undersecretary Merceditas Gutierrez and presidential adviser Rene Diaz emphasized that it was Estrada who approved the Argentine firm's contract to build-rehabilitate-operate-transfer the Caliraya-Botocan-Kalayaan hydroelectric power plant.

If Estrada had misgivings, he could have aired them then, they said.

"We don't know what bombshell Mr. Estrada will drop tomorrow," Perez said.

The contract was signed on Nov. 6, 1998 in Malacañang, with Estrada signing as witness—an unprecedented move.

Perez said the contract was "thoroughly reviewed" by government officials, such as Estrada's Finance Secretaries Edgardo Espiritu and Jose Pardo, then Justice Secretary Artemio Tuquero, the National Economic and Development Authority, and even Estrada himself.

"We've been through this process of review for so many years ... So we have nothing to fear (from) any bombshells tomorrow," Perez said.

In yesterday's hearing of the Senate committee on government corporations and pub-

ERAP/A13

Estrada lawyers say plunder trial may last till '05

By Volt Contreras

CAN the anti-graft court trying jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada hear the testimony of "around 80" defense witnesses before June 2004?

The Sandiganbayan could not, said Estrada's lawyers yesterday as they decried President Macapagal-Arroyo's publicized "wish" to see the trial concluded before her term ends on June 30 next year. Ms Macapagal also said the conclusion of the trial would pave the way for national reconciliation with justice.

Chiding Ms Macapagal for making that statement in an INQUIRER interview, defense

ESTRADA/A13

First batch of Filipino maids going to China US sending back rare RP deer

HONG KONG—The first batch of domestic maids from the Philippines will soon be heading to work in the Chinese city of Shenzhen just across the border from Hong Kong.

Twenty domestic helpers recruited from the Philippines will work for families of expatriates, including those from Hong Kong and Taiwan. The maids will begin work after the Chinese lunar new year on Feb. 1, the pro-Beijing Ta Kung Pao newspaper reported Monday.

The domestic helpers will have a monthly wage of around 3,000 yuan (US\$366), which is below Hong Kong's current minimum wage for foreign domestic helpers of HK\$3,670 (\$470).

The report said the first quota was immediately filled as demand for domestic helpers from

the Philippines was growing fast as more and more foreign businessmen were settling in Shenzhen.

The paper said talks with the Philippine labor department were still going on to recruit more domestic helpers to work in China's richest special economic zone.

Connie Bragas-Regalado, spokesperson for the Asian Migrant Coordinating Body, welcomed the news.

"At least it will give Filipino domestic helpers another option to work elsewhere," she said, referring to the Hong Kong government's plans to impose a new tax on foreign domestic helpers and possible cuts to their minimum wage salaries.

"At the same time, it is sad as it

FIRST7/A13

By Jofelle Tesorio

PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Not only Filipinos are being repatriated from the United States, but endangered Philippine animals, too.

Fifteen "fully documented" Calamian deer (*Axis calamianensis*) will be sent back to Palawan from the San Diego Zoo in California any time during the first quarter. They were taken years ago from the Calauit Wildlife Game Refuge and Wildlife Sanctuary on the island of Busuanga, north of Palawan.

In a letter to the Palawan Wildlife Resources and Rescue Center (PWRRRC) from the Zoo-

US SENDING/A13



RELATIVES of Hong Kong-based Filipino domestic helpers picket the Chinese Embassy to protest a proposal to impose a levy on the employers of foreign maids and reduce their minimum wages.

AFF

MILF ties to foreign group worries Washington

WASHINGTON is concerned over possible ties between foreign-based terror groups and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, which is holding peace talks with the Philippine government, the US ambassador to Manila said Monday.

US envoy Francis Ricciardone's comments followed charges by Singapore that MILF separatists had allowed Jemaah Islamiyah militants, who allegedly planned to bomb Western targets in the city-state, to train in their camps.

As far as Washington is concerned "the jury is still out on the MILF," said Ricciardone.

Blacklist

Washington has placed Philippine-based Abu Sayyaf Muslim rebels as well as the communist New People's Army guerrilla group on its blacklist of "foreign terrorist organizations."

"We're very concerned, though about what we understand to be the MILF's ties to other people outside the Philippines," Ricciardone told a Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines conference.

He also cited the MILF's "tolerance" of "kidnappers in their neighborhood" of the mainly Muslim western section of Mindanao.

"If they're not engaging in these things themselves then it seems some-

times they're letting these bad people run around in an area where they are the law and they have not permitted the government of the Philippines to be the law," said Ricciardone.

The ambassador, however, said the US appreciated the efforts of President Macapagal-Arroyo to strike a political settlement with the 12,500-member MILF, which has been mounting a low-level insurgency to establish an Islamic state in the southern third of the mainly Catholic archipelago.

"It is not clear to us when you say the MILF, who is speaking for them, what they want or how it's (their rebellion) going to be resolved," he said.

At the same time, Ricciardone defended his government's latest travel alert to its citizens to avoid parts of the Philippines because of the risk of being attacked, saying the travel notice should not be seen as giving an adverse international image to the country or dampening tourism.

Ricciardone said that compared to previous advisories, the latest travel alert issued in November contained less negative information on the security situation here.

"The travel advisory is not the problem. There is a serious terrorist threat in both my country and in your country. We're working on it together," Ricciardone told the Focap forum.

"I stayed here over the holidays. My family came over and relatives came over. It's travel information, not a ban, on parts of Mindanao that even Manilaños wouldn't go to themselves," the ambassador said.

A ranking official said yesterday the government was seeking to persuade the US to amend the travel alert.

"Steps are being taken but we don't want to telegraph our moves," the official, who asked not to be identified, said.

The latest US advisory dampened the release of the tourism department's latest tourism statistics, which showed the agency exceeding its target of 1.9 million tourist arrivals for 2002.

7.6 percent

The DOT said the number of travellers arriving in the Philippines grew 7.6 percent to 1.932 million last year despite ongoing political violence in the country.

The growth in visitors was fueled by increased arrivals from other Asian countries. They came despite travel warnings issued by a number of countries and the brief closures of the Australian and Canadian embassies because of unspecified threats.

US arrivals—the biggest source market, which supplied one-fifth of the Philippines' visitors last year—grew 0.8 percent. Norman Bordadora, Martin P. Marfil, TJ Burgonio, AFP and Reuters

Rebel casualties rise in Mindanao fighting

ARMY troops clashed anew Monday with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Pentagon kidnap gang, shelling rebel positions and inflicting more casualties on the fleeing guerrillas, the military said.

Army spokesman Maj. Julieto Ando said troops were verifying reports that the fresh fighting near the village of Polomolok, in the mountains of Sultan Kudarat province, had raised the death toll to 26 MILF members and their allies since Thursday. Ando said the military did not suffer any casualties in the latest clash.

Troops have occupied the mountain village after driving away a large group of MILF guerrillas and Pentagon gang members in days of fierce clashes that had killed at least 20 rebels and their allies as of Saturday.

Bodies have not been recovered because of the rebels' practice of carting away the bodies of their dead comrades but the new figure—being double-checked by the military—was based on reports from troops in the field, civilians and a captured MILF member, Ando said.

Ando told the Associated Press that the military, backed by MG-520 attack helicopters, conducted air and ground assaults on the rebels' positions, firing 105 mm howitzer cannons.

The fighting, which began Thursday, eased Saturday and soldiers were working to secure the return of more than 200 families forced from their homes in Polomolok and nearby Tulunan village, Ando said.

Obstacle course

A military report said soldiers discovered an abandoned rebel training camp near Polomolok with an obstacle course and trenches. Six sacks of rice and medical supplies were also found.

MILF spokesman Eid Kabalu acknowledged that rebel positions in Polomolok had been overtaken by the army after an intense air barrage. He denied that any rebels had been killed and said that only three guerrillas were wounded in the fighting.

Kabalu claimed three soldiers were killed and 14 others, including 11 from pro-government militias, had been wounded as of Saturday.

He denied that Pentagon gang members were in Polomolok, saying that the military made up the allegation to justify an attack on the MILF.

Polomolok is near a rugged mountainous area where the rebels maintain a stronghold.

The military said yesterday it will file a complaint against the MILF for harboring members of the Pentagon kidnap gang.

Lt. Col. Danilo Servando, Armed Forces public information office chief, announced the move following reports that the clash in Sultan Kudarat was sparked by a military operation against 30 Pentagon gang members led by Tahir Alonto.

In that clash in Polomolok, which is in Colompio town, Sultan Kudarat, the military said 500 MILF members arrived to reinforce the Pentagon gang members, prompting the military to call in air and artillery support.

The military said that at least 18 MILF members were killed as a result of their offensives.

New violation

"Definitely, we will file a complaint before the ceasefire committee for this new violation of the MILF," Servando said.

In Indanan, Sulu on Sunday, the military said that five members of the Abu Sayyaf group, which had splintered from the MILF years ago, were killed in an encounter with government troops in Barangay Bunot.

But Col. Alexander Aleo, 104th Army Brigade commander, said that only the body of one suspect, Alkhan Lutian, was recovered "while the rest were buried immediately by the group's sympathizers," as the bandits withdrew towards Mount Tumatangis.

Aleo said that based on intelligence reports, Basilan-based Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon has joined forces with another group led by Aldaber Parad.

Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Narciso Abaya said a US-trained Light Reaction Co., Scout Rangers and some Special Forces were dispatched after receiving reports that Hapilon and 30 of his followers were resting in Barangay Bunot.

"Last Saturday night, they (soldiers) made a pre-positioning. They crawled until morning and then the fire-fight started," Abaya said.

A soldier, Sgt. Charlie Matchon, was killed while eight others were wounded in the clash.

The soldiers recovered 20 40-mm bullets in a makeshift camp in Barangay Bunot. **AP Martin P. Marfil, and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

Viña slay witness now a suspect

AN EYEWITNESS to the killing of Senior Supt. Teofilo Viña in Tanza, Cavite, on Jan. 7 is now a suspect after failing to appear before authorities within the appointed time, police officials said yesterday.

As of noon yesterday, former policeman Renato Josue Arenas had not surfaced to give a statement to police despite his promise on Saturday to yield within 48 hours.

"He's now considered a suspect," said Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police director. Rosales was quick to add, however, said that Arenas had not been directly linked by the other witnesses to Viña's murder.

Arenas, who was sitting next to main suspect Medar Cruz when the latter pumped eight bullets into Viña at the home of a Tanza councilor, went into hiding after the incident. Cruz was nabbed shortly after and was charged.

The Cavite police had asked the Bureau of Immigration to place Arenas on its hold departure list to stop him from fleeing abroad.

Arenas flew into the country from the United States on Dec. 30, three days after Cruz arrived from the US.

Investigators have established that the 9-mm Sig Sauer pistol which Cruz used to shoot Viña had been purchased in Memphis, Tennessee, Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said.

"The firearm was bought by a Filipino-

American residing in San Diego early in 2001. There was no official record of its entry into the Philippines, so it might have been smuggled in," Ebdane said.

When asked if the shooting might have the offshoot of a rivalry between Viña and Cruz over a woman, Ebdane said, "That is a possibility but it is too speculative."

National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the NBI wants to find out who had bought the gun and how it was shipped into the country.

Wycoco noted that bringing the gun into the country requires an "importation permit signed by the Chief PNP."

He said US Customs officials had told the NBI the gun was manufactured in Germany before it was exported to the US.

"The gun was bought in a (US) gun store. We want to know if the (buyer gave the) gun to Cruz or if he got it himself and carried it into the country," Wycoco said.

Wycoco said that Cruz and Arenas had wanted to talk to Viña to ask for "mission orders" that would allow them to carry their guns outside their homes.

Viña was the Cavite provincial security chief at the time of his death.

"Arenas and Cruz wanted to see Viña to get mission orders to cover their firearms. That is the story being peddled (by witnesses)," Wycoco said. **TJ Burgonio and Philip Tubeza**

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NEDA MEETING

President Macapagal presides a meeting of the National Economic and Development Authority's Executive Committee, along with Agriculture Secretary Jose Luis Lorenzo, Neda Chief Romulo Neri, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura in Malacañang.

EDWIN BACASHAS

Bro. Mike forming nat'l unity coalition

From page A1

our traditional fights. It is the time to help preserve jobs and save businesses," Aguilar said.

Independent move

Velarde emphasized that discussions began as early as the first week of December last year—or at least three weeks before President Macapagal-Arroyo announced that she was not running in the 2004 elections. "We welcome her decision but our coalition is totally independent of her move," he said.

Velarde said many El Shaddai members had complained to him about their economic problems—from office workers who were laid off to businessmen suffering from shrinking sales.

"We believe that 2003 is a critical year for our economy because we cannot afford to have another year of recession. Our people are losing hope. If we don't improve the plight of our people by this year, the economic problems could boil into social unrest," Velarde said.

He said the country's economic problems had become so deep that the "silent majority"

had to take charge because they could not depend on the country's politicians to lead them. "Our problems are so serious that we cannot depend on prayers alone. Faith without action is dead."

Religious leaders

Velarde said the religious leaders' role in the coalition was to convince the business and labor sectors to ignore their differences and make sacrifices that would uplift the economy.

"We are so divided, *nagkakanya-kanya tayo* (we are thinking only of ourselves). We think that with the religious organizations backing the coalition, we can carry out our objectives more successfully."

"We will ask businessmen to forego part of their profits and use this money to create and preserve jobs. We will ask labor groups to temper their demands and probably ask them for a moratorium in view of the hostile business conditions," Velarde said.

He likened the coalition's objectives to a similar social phenomenon in South Korea, when, in the aftermath of the

Asian crisis of 1997, its citizens agreed to unite to save their economy—to the point that some of them even donated their jewelry to raise funds for the cause.

Aside from uniting the business and labor fronts, Velarde said the coalition would also put up a private sector watchdog to ensure good governance in government transactions.

New allies

Ecop has offered stiff resistance to the Labor Solidarity Movement, an umbrella organization that is also a member of the coalition, during annual talks on wage petitions.

But the petition for a wage increase was set aside late last year, with the TUCP saying it would first watch for positive indications in the economy before pursuing it again.

The businessmen and labor groups sat down for their first meeting on Dec. 26.

"We are alarmed by what could happen in 2003, but a lot of politicians are thinking only of 2004," Aguilar said.

He said the coalition would finalize a national agenda that would be submitted to Congress and Malacañang.

Velarde said transport groups, such as Piston (Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsiper at Operador Nationwide) were also part of the coalition.

More praise

Businessmen and bankers yesterday praised Ms Macapagal for her decision not to seek a second term in the 2004 polls and instead concentrate on reforms.

Her decision has set "a new standard of leadership for all to emulate," the executives said in a statement published in major newspapers.

"Your call and sacrifice have given all of us reason to believe that the Philippines can become a strong republic," they said.

"Moreover, we can now take more pride in our President who puts the interest of our country ahead of personal interest or ambition and urge all our leaders to follow such a fine example."

The statement was signed by the Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, the Investment House Association of the Philippines, the Management Association of the Philippines, and the Bankers Association of the Philippines. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and AFP*

Stop speculating, Malacañang tells maverick senator

By Dona Pazzibugan

MALACAÑANG yesterday had a piece of advice for maverick administration Sen. Joker Arroyo: Stop speculating.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye told reporters that Arroyo should end speculations about President Macapagal-Arroyo's supposed "power-sharing" deal with opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara in her attempt to forge a "government of national cooperation."

What Arroyo should have done, Bunye suggested, was show up when the President briefed her allies in the Senate about her meeting with Angara.

Bunye was referring to Ms Macapagal's meeting with seven members of the "Senate majority caucus" after the *vin d'honneur* in Malacañang on Thursday.

She assured Senate President Franklin Drilon, Senate president pro tempore Juan Flavio, Majority Leader Loren Legarda, and Senators Ralph Recto, Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Robert Barbers and Ramon Revilla that she was not backing Angara's bid to become Senate president.

Before that briefing, some administration senators aired their fears that the President had abandoned her allies in pursuit of an alliance with the opposition.

"If Senator Arroyo had just been present (in that meeting), he would have been given clarifications on this issue," said Bunye.

On Sunday, Arroyo accused the President of entering into a "troika" with Angara and Speaker Jose De Venecia to push plans for Charter changes by 2004, thereby canceling the presidential elections.

"It's unfortunate that some of these rumors are abetted by persons who were not present during the meeting," Bunye said.

He said Ms Macapagal also explained to Lakas party leaders that she was merely after a political alliance with Angara's Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, the main opposition party in both houses of Congress.

"On both occasions, the President clarified in detail what took place, the substance of her conversation with Senator Angara. And there was no relationship at all between the meeting with Senator Angara and the Cha-cha [Charter change] initiative and the moves on the Senate leadership. All of these have been clarified," said Bunye.

Who's divisive?

Reacting to Arroyo's outburst, an LDP congressman said resistance to the President's unity government was coming from within the administration coalition and

not from the opposition.

"It is now becoming clear who is the real cause of the country's divisiveness," said Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Rufino Biazon, son of LDP Sen. Rodolfo Biazon. Administration officials were acting in "total defiance" of the President's call for national unity—apparently out of "political jealousy," he added.

"It is unfortunate that the dissent comes from within the President's coalition. Apparently, their political jealousy is standing in the way of national progress," Biazon said in a statement.

The congressman stressed that the LDP's offer of cooperation with the unity government dealt with the legislative agenda and was a "sincere effort to bring this country out of the quagmire it is in."

But he said that while the LDP was offering its cooperation, "it will still maintain its right to criticize and fiscalize as it sees fit."

"It is an exercise of independence from the administration but at the same time, an act of unity for the good of the country," Biazon said.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla also belied reports that the recent meeting between Angara and the President had resulted in an offer of the Senate presidency to Angara.

CNN interview

In an interview with international cable news leader CNN, the President said she would "pursue with laser-beam focus" reforms that "would otherwise be impeded by vested interests."

"Now that I am out of the contest for the 2004 elections, that gives me much more leeway and freedom to pursue with laser-beam focus the reforms that are really needed to build our country into a strong republic," Ms Macapagal said.

An administration insider earlier said the President was coming out with a series of executive actions that would push vital reforms and break the stranglehold on certain sectors in the economy by the country's political and economic elite.

In line with this move, the President has reactivated and set weekly meetings of the executive committee of the National Economic and Development Authority.

Bunye said the revived Neda executive committee held its first meeting yesterday in Malacañang.

The committee is composed of the President, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, Trade Secretary Manuel Roxas II, Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin and Agriculture Secretary Jose Luis Lorenzo, he said. *With a report from Christine O. Aven- daño*

Palace defends Pagdanganan as new DAR secretary

From page A1

help improve the lives of our farmers," he said.

DAR employees welcomed the appointment, but agrarian reform advocates said it was a big disappointment.

Although the 13,000-strong DAR Employees Association (Darea) had endorsed former Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez and former Agriculture Secretary Leonardo Montemayor, the union said it was happy with Pagdanganan's appointment.

"At least the President did not appoint the choice of (Braganza)," Darea president Violeta Bonilla said, referring to Efren Moncupa, agrarian reform undersecretary for operations.

Darea had filed graft charges against Braganza with the Office of the Ombudsman and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission for alleged misuse of funds and abuse of authority.

Proven performance

In a congratulatory letter to Pagdanganan, the employees' union said his "proven performance" as Bulacan governor and his "initiative and management skills" were needed to put the DAR bureaucracy in order.

But the Partnership for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development Services (PARRDS) said Pagdanganan had "no extensive experience and knowledge on land reform."

"He has no track record of a

strong commitment to agrarian reform," said Ric Reyes, executive director of PARRDS, a coalition of agrarian reform advocates that include the Ugnayan ng Nagsasaring mga Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (Unorka).

Unorka led a farmers' siege of the DAR late last year to protest Braganza's alleged slow action on pending land distribution cases, mostly in Negros Occidental.

"Cooperatives are one thing, and agrarian reform is another," Reyes said.

He said that Pagdanganan had figured in land conversion cases in Bulacan that benefited land owners when he was serving as governor of the province.

Pagdanganan converted vast tracts of agricultural land for commercial, residential and industrial use to skirt the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, Reyes claimed. Local government units are empowered to exempt land from agrarian reform coverage through their land-use classification powers.

"It's the ugly face of politics again," Reyes said of the appointment. He noted that Pagdanganan, aside from being a Lakas stalwart, was close to Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

Reyes said the PARRDS would engage Pagdanganan in dialogues to fast-track the implementation of agrarian reform.

Pagdanganan said he had been instructed by the President to dis-



FAREWELL SALVO. Members of the Department of Agrarian Reform Employees Association hang a streamer and placards as a sendoff gesture to their former boss, Hernani Braganza, who is now the press secretary.

JOAN BONDOK

tribute the remaining 200,000 hectares of land covered by the agrarian reform law.

He said he was unfazed by the problems that Braganza had faced in distributing CARP land.

Fairness to all

Asked how he would approach the problem, he said "the basic philosophy should be fairness to all sectors. We have to compensate the landowners so that they will become industrialists. At the same time we should give farm-

ers access to capital so that they will be able to improve their livelihood. We have to raise the income of our farmers."

Pagdanganan said he would also seek approval from Congress of a measure that would allow the use of farmland as collateral.

Under his watch as governor, Bulacan became the province with the highest average family income. Bulacan is also known as the "cooperatives capital of the Philippines" because it has the biggest number of cooperatives in the country, according to Pag-

danganan.

Under his leadership, Bulacan received national awards such as the Gawad Pamana ng Lahi in 1996 and the Galing Pook Hall of Fame for winning three consecutive Galing Pook awards in 1994, 1995 and 1996. The province also received the Galing Pook Award for cultural development, the Consistent Regional Outstanding Winner in Nutrition Award and the First National Heritage Awards for Outstanding Local Governance.

A street parliamentarian during

the Marcos regime, Pagdanganan was appointed OIC governor of Bulacan by President Corazon Aquino in 1986 and was elected to his first full term in 1988.

He was reelected in 1992 with a margin of 114,700 votes, a record he himself broke on his third and final term when he won by 190,000 more votes than his nearest rival.

In 1998, he ran and lost in the senatorial election. Alleging that he was a victim of *dagdag-bawas* (vote padding and shaving), his campaign posters carried the words "reelect Obet Pagdanganan for senator" in the 2001 elections under the slate of the pro-administration People Power Coalition.

Pagdanganan holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from the Manuel Luis Quezon University (MLQU), where he is said to be the first and only summa cum laude of its school of engineering.

He earned his master's degree in business administration from De La Salle University and bachelor of laws degree from the MLQU. He was conferred a doctorate degree in education, honoris causa, by the Bulacan State University in 1995.

Pagdanganan is married to Susana Oblesias of Sariaya, Quezon, with whom he has two children, Maria Rossana who is now a department manager at Unilever-PRC, and Roberto Raymond, a student at the University of Asia and the Pacific.

Comelec set to move up filing period for poll bets

By Blanche S. Rivera

TO COMPLY with the technical requirements of the counting machines that will be used for the first time in the 2004 polls, the Commission on Elections is set to move up the period for the filing of candidacies by two months.

Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra said this means the filing deadline would be reset from March 2004 to possibly Jan. 11, 2004.

With the decision, the Comelec finally heeded the National Movement for Free Elections timeline for the acquisition of some 2,500 machines for the computerization of the polls.

In what Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion Jr. called a "historic" meeting, the Comelec and Namfrel yesterday agreed to work together on the

project to cleanse the voters' list.

Comelec chair Ruben Abalos attended the meeting at the Manila Hotel with all the six commissioners, and Namfrel brought along representatives from the business and religious sectors.

The two groups were at odds for most of 2002 over an impeachment complaint against Commissioner Luz Tancangco.

"We're starting the new year very well," Concepcion said. "We have had differences in the past two years, but since the President has set an example for national unity, we should do the same."

Following the Namfrel timeline, the Comelec should issue within the month an en banc resolution defining the terms of reference and requirements for the bidding for the counting machines.

It should then conduct the bidding

by February and the awarding of the contract by the end of March, so that the machines could be delivered and tested—and the Comelec personnel trained—in the next 15 months.

Namfrel secretary general Guillermo Luz warned that if this schedule was not observed, the government would have "a very difficult time" with automation.

Abalos explained that the Comelec could not move earlier because it had been "handicapped by lack of funds." But he said Malacañang recently assured him of P2.2 billion for the project, and so the bidding could now be scheduled.

The Comelec has 68 counting machines which use the optical marked recognition technology, acquired for the 1996 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. These will be upgraded to read the 2004 ballots.

'What about us?' Saudi OFWs cry

"WHAT about stranded workers in Saudi Arabia?" the militant migrant workers group Migrante International (MI) asked yesterday, even as it welcomed reports that about 200 "runaway" overseas Filipino workers in Kuwait were due home soon.

MI chair Poe Gratela reported that around 1,500 OFWs in Saudi Arabia had formed a group called Kapisanan ng mga Migranteng Stranded sa Riyadh (Kamsi-SR), hoping they

would be heard better as a group.

Gratela said most of the workers had run away from abusive employers, but were unable to come home due to lack of travel documents, exit papers or money for airfare.

The recommendation to repatriate the Kuwaiti-based Filipino runaways was made recently by the Middle East Preparedness Team (MEPT), headed by retired Armed Forces chief Gen. Roy Cimatu. *Agnes E. Donato*



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C.P. Romulo remembered

THE UNITED Nations Association of the Philippines (UN-AP) marks today the 104th birth anniversary of the late Gen. Carlos P. Romulo with rites at the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Romulo, the only Filipino to be elected United Nations General Assembly president, was born on Jan. 14, 1899.

Full military honors, a blessing and prayer and floral offerings will cap the rites to be attended by members of the diplomatic corps, government and non-government officials and Romulo's widow, Beth Day Romulo.

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Deadly machismo

THE SLAYING of an Ateneo law graduate on Friday by a motorcycle rider whose bike was bumped by the Atenean's car is another argument for leaving one's gun at home unless he is a law enforcer on duty. The killer may have a license for his gun but had he left it at home, he would not have shot Jose Ramon Llamas dead.

The impulse slaying is one of a rising number of cases of killings or shootings over minor traffic incidents. Surely, a human life is much more important and much more valuable than a dented fender, a damaged motorcycle or a bruised ego.

The trouble with some people driving cars and motorcycles is that they have a false macho concept of themselves. They will not allow other drivers to cut across their paths. They think their maleness is diminished if they allow other drivers to outrace them on the road. They take the slightest damage to their cars or motorcycles as the equivalent of a serious assault on their persons. And so they retaliate not just with vituperation but also with a physical attack, or sometimes, like what happened in the Llamas case, with a volley of fatal gunfire.

Of course, driving in Metro Manila can be an upsetting, irritating experience, what with some boorish drivers always trying to get the better of their fellow drivers and violating traffic laws and ordinances at every opportunity. It's enough to drive someone either up the wall or to a homicidal frenzy.

But still forbearance is called for. Every human life is sacred and should not be ended just because a person violated a traffic rule, tried to outrace or outsmart another driver or accidentally bumped his car or motorcycle.

The slaying of Llamas is reminiscent of the case of Rolito Go, a businessman who in 1993 was found guilty of slaying Eldon Maguan, 25, an engineering graduate of De La Salle University. Go shot Maguan while they were having an argument over the right of way on Wilson Street in Greenhills, San Juan on July 2, 1991.

There have been many other killings and shootings over minor road feuds. On a Saturday night in November 1997, a police captain was killed and his wife was wounded when five men, with whom they had an argument over a minor traffic problem fired at them. During the Christmas rush in December 1997, two men were killed and a woman was wounded over traffic disputes in separate shootings in Makati City and Taguig.

On April 13, 1998, PO1 Roger Esteves shot Elmer Vilasaper over an argument over the right of way. On July 10, Col. Alfonso Bernate, a personnel officer assigned to the AFP headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo, shot to death Reynaldo Cantos, a jeepney driver, after the latter's jeepney nearly sideswiped the former's car. On Aug. 9, one of three men riding on motorcycles shot dead Ferdinand Vilasanta, a businessman who was driving a car, after he tried to overtake them.

The list goes on and on: a retired PC sergeant killed an Army sergeant in Taguig over a minor traffic dispute in May 1999; a policeman was shot by a man riding on a scooter during a traffic altercation in Pasay City in October 1999; a businessman was shot in the left eye and thigh by the driver and a passenger of a Honda Civic he overtook on the Skyway in May 2000; a tricycle driver was shot dead by a businessman over a slight dent on a Pajero in July 2000.

What is it that turns Filipino drivers into homicidal maniacs? We believe one factor is the Filipino male's false idea of machismo, his bloated ego that is easily offended, even by just a minor traffic incident. We would admire, probably even praise, a person who would kill for a principle, for honor, for country. But for a dented fender? Surely, human life is much more valuable than a Honda Civic or a Pajero.

It is also machismo that makes some Filipinos carry their guns outside their homes even if they are not law enforcers on official duty. For some, the gun is a phallic symbol to be brandished and used at the slightest provocation to signify the owner's maleness.

We believe it's time policymakers and law enforcement officials seriously considered the proposal of the Gunless Society headed by Nandy Pacheco. The proposal is simple: Only law enforcers on duty and certain other classes of people such as cashiers carrying large amounts of cash should be authorized to carry firearms outside their homes. Such a law can prevent the killing of another Maguan or another Llamas.



Urgent problems facing DENR's Gozun

As I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



and shenanigans, as we have experienced in the privately run drug-testing centers for applicants for driver's licenses, the health testing centers for workers going abroad, the privately owned tow trucks abusing its privileges, or the Tesda testing centers for entertainers going abroad. By paying a little more, you can get passing marks from many of these testing centers. There are many cases of workers who failed the lab tests at reputable hospitals but who get a clean bill of health from small laboratories specializing in OFW applicants. Fixers are also active in some of these centers.

In addition, it is so easy to get these required certificates from Recto just like any other fake documents. In short, all of these requirements, while meritorious in intent, do not serve the purpose for which they were set up. Instead, they only serve to boost the Recto industry, employ more fixers, and encourage corruption in general.

At the same time, they bring greater expenses and hardships to the paying public. Worse, they allow the unqualified and underserving to get permits and licenses, like the motorcycle-riding wacko who shot to death an Ateneo law graduate on Taft Avenue. If his gun was licensed, he no doubt was able to get certificates saying that he passed the required drug and psychological tests, which he obviously couldn't have passed legitimately.

But the most dangerous problem the DENR should attend to is the indiscriminate tiding of forestlands and watersheds by land grabbers. The law is very clear: forestlands, watersheds

and other protected areas of the public domain included in the Nipas Act (National Integrated Protected Areas System) are beyond the commerce of man and cannot be titled to private individuals. Yet scores of landgrabbers are able to get titles to them.

Since the titling of these areas is clearly prohibited by law, the titles were obviously obtained fraudulently and therefore void from the very beginning. Therefore, the government, through the DENR as the guardian of the public domain, can cancel these titles without going through the lengthy process of a court hearing. So why doesn't the DENR do it?

And why are Penros (provincial environment and natural resources officers) who are paid low salaries, and are therefore more susceptible to temptation, allowed to issue land certificates for lands in the public domain? Just one example: the issuance of titles by a Penro to part of the Marikina Watershed Reservation in Baras, Rizal, to a number of persons with the same Chinese surname. This portion of the watershed was reforested with Benguet pines by the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation during the Marcos administration. What a beautiful place it is now. It probably has more pines than Baguio. But the titles given to persons with a Chinese sounding family name has endangered this reforestation area. Worse, squatters are cutting down the trees to make them into charcoal.

The site is just an hour's drive from the DENR main offices in Quezon City. If the DENR cannot safeguard a valuable area that is so near to its main office, how can it safeguard areas in far-flung provinces?

A DENR secretary filed charges against the Penro. But when a new secretary took over, he was promoted upon the recommendation of the DENR's legal department.

Secretary Gozun would do well to find out how many people in the legal department have titles or lease contracts, either directly or through dummies, in prohibited forestlands and watersheds. She would be surprised by what she will find.

Strength

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cannot hold on to a great many things.

But it is far more than credibility. The problem with this particular concept of "strong leader" or "strong political will" is that it misses the point entirely. It suggests an entirely wrongheaded view of strong leadership and strong political will. I am grateful to Paras in this respect for clarifying the point. His suggestion that Danding Cojuangco is the ideal strong president who can wield strong political will shows precisely what a strong leader or a strong political will is not.

That Cojuangco has the copious means to run a campaign must already alert us to the perverse nature of this particular definition of a strong leader or strong political will. For the obvious question is where Cojuangco got the oodles of money to do so. Last I heard, the coconut farmers were still demanding to have the money they paid for the coconut levy, courtesy of Cojuangco's boss, who was Ferdinand Marcos, given back to them. And last I heard, the Presidential Commission on Good Government was inclined to believe that the majority of the San Miguel shares, which Cojuangco bought with coconut levy money, belonged to the coconut farmers.

There is, in fact, a monumental difference, no, an entire chasm, between a strongman and a strong leader, between ruthlessness and political will. It is the difference between Hitler and Gandhi, between Joseph Estrada and Hilario Davide, between a schoolyard bully and an antiwar protester. It is a fallacy to think (a fallacy we are particularly susceptible to) that a government or leader that is given more and more power becomes more and more strong. Not at all. A government or

leader that is given more and more power invariably only becomes more and more abusive. It is not political will to coerce dirt-poor farmers into coughing up a part of their meager sustenance to enrich other people. It is greed.

Strength in leadership is never an outer or physical trapping, it is an inner and moral essence. On the surface, Erap was a strong leader: He was tough-talking ("Walang kamakamag-anak..."), he had thugs running around in the guise of cops and cronies, he never hesitated to wage a war of attrition against the whole Muslim population to punish a group that had turned to kidnapping foreign tourists. And on the surface, Davide was a weakling. Until the impeachment trial, he lay in the shadows, or the margins of national life, content to carry out his duties as best he could. As events showed, however, the exact opposite was true. Erap was the absolute weakling, the loud and besotted president who brought the country to the edge of the precipice. And Davide was the resolute leader, the quiet and unassuming chief justice who plucked the country from the pit of oblivion.

What makes a leader strong is not that he arrogates more and more power unto himself, which is what's wrong with GMA's concept of "a strong republic." If that were so, then the police would be the epitome of strength, and Panfilo Lacson the paragon of fortitude. They are not. The one is merely the epitome of madness, and the other the paragon of non-accountability. What makes a leader strong is character, sense of purpose, and an uncompromising dedication to the public weal. Authoritarianism is not stronger than democracy, which is the mistake we keep making, longing for it each time we are assailed by a sense of drift. It is weaker than democracy. Democracy is the strongest system there is, resting as it does on the greatest power on earth, which is the will of the people.

That is what political will simply means. It is not resolutely pursuing what one desires, it is unwaveringly doing what the people demand.

I WAS bowled over by something I read in the papers last week. That was the suggestion of Negros Oriental Rep. Jacinto Paras that Lakas seriously consider Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco as its standard-bearer. Lakas had been throwing some names around over the last couple of weeks, and Paras thought of chipping in. Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition is the second biggest party in the House and a member of Jose de Venecia's coalition.

Paras defended his proposal thus: It's not just that Cojuangco has the money to finance a campaign, although that is a virtue enough in itself. It is also that Cojuangco has "a strong political will" that is needed to solve the country's problems. "We need a strong president who can turn around the economy and deal with terrorism. Danding is the ideal combination of economic power and political will."

Well, the theme of a strong leader, or one who is capable of showing strong political will, has been much in vogue lately. Much of it owes to GMA, who has been harping on the point for some time now. Chiefly through her concept of "a strong republic," which she unveiled during her last Sona. But she has also amplified on that in various utterances, not least in her speech in Baguio where she declared her intention not to run again. She also declared her intention to exercise a strong leadership over the next year and a half.

At the very least, the problem there is credibility. In GMA's case, it is not easy to see how a leader who has been waylaid by charges of giving aid and comfort to crooks inside and outside of government can be thought of as having the political will to discipline the nation. You cannot discipline your own ranks, you cannot discipline anybody else. And it is not easy to see how a leader who has driven a good deal of the population to desperate lengths in such a short time can be thought of as having the power to give the country a sense of purpose and direction. You cannot hold on to 19 percent of the population—which is the staggering number of Filipinos who want to leave their country—you

More educational campaign needed for Charter change

THOSE of us advocating Charter change should not be disheartened by the survey results showing a split among ordinary Filipinos over this issue, with the antis outnumbering the pros. Pulse Asia's November survey shows that 58 percent are against Charter change at this time while 42 percent approve. But the number favoring change has been steadily rising. Nationwide approval rose from 36 percent last July to 42 percent in November, while opposition fell from 64 percent to 58 percent. Pulse Asia noted that the sharpest turnaround in public opinion took place in Luzon and Mindanao, with opposition in Luzon, which stood at 73 percent in July, going down by 20 percent in November. Support for change in Metro Manila, the intellectual capital of the country, went up by seven points.

What all this means is that there is a continuing need for a vigorous educational campaign among the citizens on the benefits of Charter change. It is important to show that the best time to effect it is now when the President has disavowed all political ambition in 2004 and a shift to the parliamentary system will not affect the sitting President. For many citizens, there are two arguments for Charter change that are easiest to comprehend: the need to have only one legislative chamber in order to avoid gridlock and reduce the enormous expense of having two chambers; and the need to prevent domination of our politics by movie stars and celebrities.

Since I wrote about the refusal of Blue Cross insurance company to pay the medical bills of my sister-in-law, Neomi Tanedo Olivares, although she had paid fully for coverage, many cases involving humble as well as prominent citizens have been brought to my attention. One was that of former Rep. Miguel Romero, who was able to collect from Blue Shield only after he applied the full weight of his legislative post and law office. But another prominent personality, Cecilia Blanco-Mitra, widow of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra, was not as lucky.

Cecile told me that before she took out a sick-

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



ness and accident insurance policy, she called up Ruth Padilla, wife of House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla and an insurance agent from whom she had been buying insurance, to check out Blue Cross in the US. Ruth's contact said it was okay. The draft insurance listed a number of "permanent exclusions," but when Cecile objected the Blue Cross agent said the exclusions could be lifted by paying a higher premium, to which Cecile agreed. She paid \$4,706 and received verbal assurances that the permanent exclusions would not apply in her case.

In May 2001, Cecile advised her Blue Cross agent that she needed a knee operation at the University of Southern California. He assured her that her hospitalization expenses would be covered by Blue Cross. After her operation, she returned to Manila and accomplished all the Blue Cross claim forms with supporting hospital receipts and doctors' certificates.

When she filed her reimbursement claim, Blue Cross informed her, in a letter noted by its medical director, Dr. Noel Rosas, that her osteoarthritis was a "pre-existing condition" and therefore her claim could not be honored. She was further informed that the earlier waiver of the preexisting condition would only take effect on her second year of coverage (her operation fell within the first year). Not a cent was reimbursed and her demand for the return of her premium payment was rejected.

What is obvious is that the insurance company reneged on its agreement that degenerative joint disease was one of the conditions covered by Cecile's policy. Nobody also told her that these were

applicable only on the second year. There was clearly a lot of misrepresentation by Blue Cross.

If this could happen to Cecile Mitra, think of what's happening to many citizens who are unknown and totally helpless in fighting these manipulators in their hour of greatest need. Cecile told me that every time she would call the company, different staffers would answer and she couldn't find the people she had dealt with earlier. "It seems like a very unstable company," she noted. Congress, in deference to Speaker Mitra's widow, ought to investigate what is beginning to look like a grand scam.

News for the good Samaritans who recently donated for the treatment of 11-year-old, fourth grader John Carlo Mituda. John is afflicted with SSPE, a disease arising from complications from the measles that results in degeneration of the brain and the nervous system. He is currently confined in bed 25 at the Philippine General Hospital's Ward 9 under the care of Dr. Judy Pipo Devezza. The SSPE Foundation, headed by Mandy Navasero and this columnist, purchased the 24 vials of IVIG medicine needed for his five-day treatment. Zuellig gave 50 pieces of Tegretol. Among the donations that I found most touching were the P750 sent by two young students of the Maria Montessori School in Pasay City and some money from his former teacher at Aves Elementary School in Mandaluyong.

One thing we regret is that John Carlo's condition appears to have degenerated a bit from the time we last saw him just before Christmas. At that time, he could still sit up and exhibited no spasmodic movements. Now there's some jerking and he cannot get up. This is due to the delay in his treatment, after his family failed to answer the doctor's summons to bring him to PGH right away. This only shows how important it is to get medical help for SSPE patients during the early stage of the disease.

We continue to hope that the doctors will be able to restore this bright student to full health.

On a less-traveled road

ERNESTO Ordonez, one of two longest-serving undersecretaries in government (together with DPWH Undersecretary Teddy Encarnacion, he has been in government since 1987), resigned yesterday from the Department of Agriculture.

Ordonez is leaving the government not to return to the more lucrative private sector, but to join the NGO community, responding to the request for assistance of three national small farmer and fisherfolk coalitions which will be announcing soon a merging on common issues regarding globalization and economic empowerment.

Those who know him since his days before joining government would recognize this move as typical of the former student activist and Student Council president at the Ateneo de Manila University in 1969. From the Ateneo, he went for graduate studies to Yale University, then pursued a master's degree and a doctorate at New York University. He became the highest paid executive for his age group in Xerox Corp. in the United States where he worked for seven years until he decided to return to the country in 1981, after a nine-year warrant for his arrest for subversion was lifted.

Since his return, he has served the government in various capacities, including stints as undersecretary of the Department of Trade and Industry, presidential adviser on economic affairs with the rank of secretary and chair of the Presidential Committee on Flagship Programs and Projects, and undersecretary for operations of the Department of Agriculture.

ASKED why he chose to leave the government to work with farmers' and fisherfolk's groups, Ordonez said he believes he can help the country's small farmers and fisherfolk achieve unity among themselves and with government in attaining common goals of development.

He said he can help the agriculture sector "crystallize its needs" and communicate these much more clearly to the government, since he knows "the government machinery and network, the language and the terminology." He believes he can also help farmers and fisher-

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



folk come up with common programs and projects especially in terms of sharing technology, as seen in his experience propagating the Certified Seed Strategy of the Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) Program.

At the DA, Ordonez said, the GMA team brought in by then Secretary Leonardo Montemayor came in with a budget diminished by nearly P150 million, but still managed to double usage of certified rice seeds from 700,000 hectares in 2000 to 1.5 million hectares in 2001. By 2002, some 1.8 million farmers had benefited from the program, which exceeded its target of 12.7 and 13 million metric tons for 2001 and 2002, with record production levels of 12.95 and 13.27 million metric tons for the same periods. "Palay production even increased (by 2.4 percent in 2002) in spite of the long dry spell which was experienced in a major rice producing area last year," Ordonez noted in a briefing paper.

The question of course is: If Ordonez and Montemayor were so successful in terms of increasing rice yields, why was Montemayor recently replaced, and why did Ordonez resign? Because he wanted to focus on the "unity" theme, Ordonez chose not to dwell on his "other" reasons for leaving. But if he is even just half as successful in his new NGO work as he was in government, then he could be said to have chosen the better, if less trod, road.

May the wind be at your back, Ernie. Goodspeed.

LAUNCHED last Friday at the Pan Pacific Hotel was the "Gender Mainstreaming Resource Kit,"

described as a "compendium of tools to guide government agencies, local government units, NGOs and other partners in gender mainstreaming."

A project of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW), with funding support from the Canadian government through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), GMRK is actually a compilation of theory, best practices, guidelines and case studies in mainstreaming gender in the various stages of development planning, including the integration of gender in planning, programming and budgeting, the creation of a gender-responsive organization, and the generation of gender sensitive (or sex disaggregated) statistics and data.

As I commented to NCRFW staff, it seems quite difficult to "sell" to the media the significance of the GMRK which, at first glance, would seem to be nothing more than a collection of guidebooks and manuals. But in effect, the kit serves to institutionalize the work of gender mainstreaming that the commission has undertaken since after the first Edsa revolt. Perhaps what the NCRFW should "sell" shouldn't be just GMRK, but the concept and practice of gender mainstreaming itself.

Gerard Belanger, who as CIDA head of aid acted as GMRK's "godfather," put it most succinctly when he asked: "What do these tools mean to the lives of Filipino women, especially the poor? How will these tools make a difference in governance?"

NCRFW Chair Aurora Javate de Dios was optimistic that gender mainstreaming will ultimately result in "transforming the way government looks at the concerns of women and men," adding that at present, the commission is focusing its work on three areas: economic empowerment of women, upholding and expanding the human rights of women, and the creation of gender-responsive governance.

The GMRK should prove invaluable in advancing this agenda. After all, how can the government help women, if it does not "see" women, or know that women have concerns quite distinct from that of men and children?

McDonald's loses a round

THERE is in Mexico a town called Oaxaca (pronounced wa-ha-ca), a long bus ride away from Mexico City. Located between two mountain ranges, the place is isolated but it has been a favorite tourist destination since the 1970s when hippies came to watch a solar eclipse, enjoy the local color and whatever drugs were available. It is a designated Unesco World Heritage site as well.

Nowadays European and American tourists in their Bermudas still flock to Oaxaca for its colonial architecture and picturesque streets, high-quality museum and outdoor cafes surrounding a 473-year-old colonnaded plaza. The town is not particularly wealthy especially in the outlying areas but it has maintained native traditions and preserved its colonial heritage, which constitute a major attraction for visitors.

For the past year Oaxaca has waged a battle with the fast-food behemoth McDonald's which wanted to open a restaurant at the plaza's eastern edge. There were protests and debates but finally the town voted to bar the giant from the heart of its historic city center. This meant a loss of 70 badly needed jobs that McDonald's could have provided.

At this point, you might want to ask yourself what is the difference and why the difference between our understanding of historical preservation and that of the Oaxacans. They are no richer than the residents of Vigan or Balayan, Batangas, I would think, or even those of Miagao, Iloilo. (The church there is designated a World Heritage site but may end up de-listed after church and civil officials decided to add a wing to the structure. This is tantamount to installing another room in a pyramid using hollow blocks.) Chances are their level of education should be about the same as ours and yet there appears to be a greater understanding on the part of the Oaxacans of the value of their heritage and the incongruity of constructing a fast-food restaurant within a storied area.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper



There has been no such hesitation on our part.

It isn't as though McDonald's doesn't have a presence in Oaxaca, but its restaurant is located on the outskirts, beside—get this—Sears and Sam's Place "plus roughly 230 other outlets" that have opened in Mexico since 1985. One can conclude that the people are aware of the inroads of American culture. But it's not a place where you have the usual anti-American-imperialism, Yankee-go-home type of protest. Nor can you claim that the Oaxacans are not nationalistic (remember this are people who threw off the Spanish yoke nearly a century before we did) but are confident enough to preserve what remains of their colonial past. Not only do they appear to have accepted their past but they can appreciate its artistic value and the tourist dollars it can earn.

There were residents who supported McDonald's entry provided the décor respected the colonial architecture and didn't flaunt the M arches. (In contrast, the entrance to Laocao where the vista once focused on the cathedral is now centered on the golden arches that dominate the scene.)

What is difficult to understand with regard to our own attitude is why we cannot see the value, or attraction, for that matter, of uniqueness, the authenticity of one-of-a-kind valuable commercial assets. Why would anyone travel hundreds of miles to see a tawdry version of Hong Kong or Taiwan with shiny thin layers of brass decorating the lobby of a high-rise? Or why would I bother with

our malls when Los Angeles has them in every block? Instead of polishing our natural amenities, we very often end up with convention centers (which Hong Kong has in spades), sports stadiums (like then one in Lingayen, Pangasinan) or a gambling casino, hardly attracting wholesome family oriented tourism.

Due to this blindness, Filipinos have lost much of their architectural heritage, the little that was left after the destruction of World War II. Most of our officials seem to think that strip malls and fast-food outlets are the key to a successful tourism program, an attitude that refuses to accept that tourists travel to see and experience something unique and different.

The spokesman for the opposition in Oaxaca, renowned painter Francisco Toledo, explained that it wasn't globalization per se that they opposed, but a type of modernization they refer to as "comercializacion salvaje"—a reckless disregard for the unique and irreplaceable. This is not because Oaxacans are culturally ignorant of others and acting xenophobically. There have been successive waves of immigrants—Chinese, Americans and even Filipinos—that Toledo believes "enriched" their culture, creating a distinct and different mixture that exists nowhere else.

In opposing McDonald's, the Oaxacans pointed out that more than their 16th century architecture was at risk. They were worried about their water supply (you ever read of anyone bringing up the pressure on the infrastructure of any of those malls that keep marring our cityscapes?), pollution and the vanishing of their native languages.

McDonald by the way is closing 175 of its outlets due to "flat sales, falling profits and free-falling stock prices"—except in the Philippines probably.

(Data taken from LA Times article by Reed Johnson, 1/5/03.)

Fortune, misfortune

ONE of my patients once asked me, "So what brought you here?"

"Fortune or misfortune—I'm not quite certain yet," I told her.

Honestly, I don't know for sure. I came to America a few years back with a luggage full of survival skills and a generous amount of pocket money from my dad. I didn't want to leave my country, but I had to. The land of my birth was forcing me out.

I had just finished my course and planned on pursuing a career in medicine. I took and passed the board exams for physical therapists, then took the medical admission test and got a grade that got me into the waiting list for the medical program of my alma mater. But those were about the only nice things that happened to me. I could have sworn I strongly felt rejection, as if everything was trying to dislodge me from where I was: lousy, low-paying jobs, deceitful friends, family matters and, worst, a lost love. The last started out as something exciting and wonderful until everything turned into a disaster of the worst kind and I ended up dreadfully broken. I felt I could not handle it so I decided to leave, hoping that absence would help time heal all the wounds.

So off I went to the United States, staying with a close friend from high school. It was my first time to live far away from my family. As soon as I left home, I realized that I was nothing. Every comfort that I enjoyed before came from my parents' own labors. Thus, I felt I had to make something out of my life. But first I had to stop wallowing in disgusting self-pity and start proving my worth. So, I psyched myself to start a career.

But then, what? Was I feeling another sense of decline in this new environment? Was I being hounded by bad luck or the wrong choices I made? Were those heartless men I got involved with part of my misfortune or did I cause them to be what they turned out to be?

Depression started to be a constant companion again, hardly the best way to start my journey to success. With dad's money running out fast, I had to find a job.

I did and I tried to survive because I didn't want to go home burdened with several *balikbayan* boxes full of failures. I had to hang on to my job, even if every time I took the two-hour bus ride to work I could not help but think how much more comfortable my life was back home where I was driving my own car. There was not a single night when I didn't feel wretched, and hardly a moment when I didn't miss my family and loved ones. There was not a meal when I didn't crave for my mom's hot dishes, especially when all I was having were leftovers from my lunch. There were times when I hurt myself physically by cutting my wrists slightly with a pair of scissors and then splashing alcohol on the cuts I made. Definitely I wasn't trying to kill myself. I just wanted to convert my emotional pain into a physical one, believing it would heal better and faster. Brilliant.

But all those times, I never called home to give anyone bad news. Life could never be better, I always told anyone who inquired, hoping they didn't notice that I was choking on my own words.

I did not (and I still don't) want my family to be involved in my mishaps. I went through really bad times but I bore my crosses in silence. I knew my folks had their own problems to deal with and burdening them with my own would not make life easier for them. Only my best friend knew my pains.

How was I able to rise above all these? By constant praying. I wealed, whined and begged for divine intervention, and my prayers were granted.

Better days started to unfold for me. I took and passed the state board exams, received my professional license, got a better pay and even got the chance to model in an Asian designers' fashion show, something I never thought I would be doing again. Above all, I found the man who appreciates me and who gives me as much love as I give to him. We recently had our church wedding.

When I went back to the Philippines for a visit, I made sure that I would bring closure to everything, including my relationships with some people in the past and things that mattered. I didn't want to deal with what could have been again. I cut my ties with so-called friends who never wished me well from the beginning, the people who would be delighted to see me fail. And I strengthened my bonds with genuine friends who were always there for me.

When it was time for me to leave, I felt some emptiness because really there is no place like home, even if home wants me to live somewhere else.

My life has always been like a roller-coaster ride. If I went into its details (anonymously, maybe), it would be a rich material for a telenovela. I think that for as long as I'm breathing, I will always experience some sudden twists and amazing turns.

Even as I write this piece, I am waiting for the result of a brain MRI I underwent two nights ago. My neurologist wanted to make sure I don't have multiple sclerosis. I'm hoping I don't have it. Let it be just a mild nerve irritation that makes my legs tingle, or my imagination that makes me my legs feel weak. Oh, well, I'm tired of feeling miserable.

Besides, that's something I want to write about again: "I once asked my therapist, 'So what brought you here?'"

Bea Arcilla-Merza, 25, is a graduate of the University of the East and works as a physical therapist in California.

THEY SAID

Continuing war

"A battle has been won, but the war is far from over."
—Ed Escudeta, lawyer of extradited Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, on Hernando Peres's resignation as justice secretary

Revision needed

"There's really a need to review our extradition law so that it will be more protective of the rights of our citizens."
—Rep. Apolinario Lozada, chair of the House committee on foreign relations, on the existing extradition law

Time for change

"Now is the proper time for Charter change."
—Bukidnon Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, urging legislators from Lakas to focus on changing the Constitution and not on picking the party's standard bearer

Higher GSIS premiums mean bigger benefits

THIS refers to the article titled, "Workers rap new GSIS deduction," which came out last Jan. 4, 2003.

In the article, reporter Christian Esguerra missed a number of important details which we would like to point out because the GSIS members have the right to know the truth.

Please allow us to stress that only around 5 percent of the GSIS membership is affected by the reasonable increase in premiums due to the removal of the average monthly compensation (AMC) limit. This increase is going to make their pensions upon retirement higher, equal to and in the long run even more than the salaries they received while in active service. This increase in premiums, therefore, translates into an enormous increase in retirement benefits.

The increase is generally affordable to the majority of the members affected by the removal of the AMC limit. Around 20,000 GSIS members who comprise the bulk of the workers who will pay increased premiums will shell out an additional P80 per month, which is about the

price of two cigarette packs or a meal. Some 14,000 members will pay an additional P180 a month and 16,000 members, P260 a month. The rest—20,000 more members—will pay a heftier amount. However, while the members will be paying 7 percent more in premiums for salaries over and above P16,000, the increase in premiums will translate to a minimum of 24 percent and a maximum of 88 percent increase in their monthly pensions. Under the program, the GSIS member invests in his future.

The removal of the AMC limit is legal. There is no need for Congress to repeal the law to remove the AMC limit. Section 43 of the GSIS Act of 1997 clearly states that the GSIS Board of Trustees has the power to formulate policies, guidelines and programs to effectively carry out the purposes of the act, which is to provide for its members the most equitable and responsive social security coverage. The removal of the ARC limit does exactly that: it maximizes the affected members' premium payments/investments while they are young to



provide for them the best possible protection when they retire.

We would like to clarify that the increase in premium contributions of 5 percent of our total number of members will result in an increase in benefits. It has nothing to do with the purchase of the Juan Luna painting, the funds for which were sourced not from retirement funds but from the GSIS general insurance fund.

The removal of the AMC limit was publicized in a number of road shows and symposia not only in Metro Manila but around the country, with many representatives of government and GSIS members in attendance. It was never kept under wraps, and was, on the contrary, widely promoted.

—MER NILO R. RACIMO,
vice president for public affairs, Government Service Insurance System, Financial Center, Pasay City

Celebrating New Year without firing guns

THE CELEBRATIONS ushering in 2003 were really different from those of previous years. There were only a few people who got hurt—about 200 or more persons—compared to previous years. And the injuries were mostly caused by firecracker blasts and not stray bullets.

This was a very good start for 2003 and this was mainly because of the campaign of the Armed Forces of the

Philippines and the Philippine National Police banning the firing not only of their own guns but also guns of civilians in the whole metropolis and nearby provinces.

We would like to thank the AFP and the PNP for initiating this action. Many people felt safer, knowing they would not get hit by stray bullets fired by individuals with itchy trigger fingers.

The people also fully coop-

erated and the result was favorable for all, especially those living in congested areas where merrymaking is usually marked by the firing of guns.

Maybe there will come a time when not one shot will be fired during the New Year's Eve revelry.

—LUCY MAE,
DOLLY B. CRUZ
and Ladies on Wheels Club,
Marikina City

A sense of the future

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan



LAST December, Dr. Corazon Raymundo of the University of the Philippines' Population Institute (UPPI) shared some of the preliminary statistics coming out of the 3rd Young Adult Fertility and Sexuality Study (YAFS). Among the more disturbing findings was the hopelessness felt by young Filipinos.

The survey, involving some 19,000 respondents, mostly aged 15 to 24, from throughout the Philippines, had an item that asked, "During the past three months have you felt really hopeless about the future?" The preliminary figures had 3.3 percent of the respondents responding "always" and 5.9 percent saying "most of the time." Another 37.1 percent said they felt this hopelessness "sometimes."

As part of the YAFS team doing the analysis, I was very disturbed by these figures. Even limiting ourselves to those who answered "always" or "most of the time," we get a figure of almost 10 percent which can translate to about one or two million young Filipinos, not an insignificant number.

At a more extreme level, such findings could help to explain the growing numbers of suicides and suicide attempts among young people. About two years ago, I wrote an article calling attention to the rise in reported suicides among young people. In this latest survey, about three percent of the respondents reported they had attempted suicide, which would mean about half a million young Filipinos.

A caveat is in order here: Having worked with young people for so long, I can say many of these attempts are probably "pangpa-andar," half-hearted attempts that aren't really meant to kill, but they are very serious attempts to catch the attention of parents and elders, a cry for help mixed with anger and rebellion.

The suicides represent only one aspect of this hopelessness. Remember the findings are part of a national survey on sexuality and I can say that discontent with the present, translated into a lack of a sense of the future, can trigger off a chain of reactions that affect sexuality which can then have a backlash on society.

I know, that's a mouthful, so let me break that down, using bits and pieces of life stories being gathered as part of the YAFS project.

Liza is 16, growing up in an urban poor community. She shares a hovel with her parents, six other siblings and an assortment of relatives. She should be graduating from high school this March, but she knows the prospects for going on to college are almost nil. She knows, too, that jobs will be hard to come by when she finishes high school.

Liza has a boyfriend, Jun, a classmate about her age. As far as Liza's concerned, he's her papa, her Big Man. She has a picture of Jun in her wallet with his dedication at the back in Tagalog, "To my beloved Mommy, by Jun," with hearts inscribed all over. Their terms of endearment—"daddy" and "mommy"—reflect a notion that eventually they will get married. There's some sense of the future here, of marriage and a family.

Liza sighs when she talks about Jun's boasting and promising he'll be a good husband and father. She talks about how silly Jun is, especially when he says they will have six children, too, and how she protests, saying they'll only have three. Ah, but then she remembers her mother only wanted three, too, and ended up with six.

It's precisely because Liza is so practical that she has her feelings of hopelessness. She says her aspirations are simple, but even the most basic of these dreams—a stable family and home life—seem so unattainable. So, for all her cynicism about male braggadocio, Jun and their relationship do mean the world to her. This relationship with Jun is her only handle on the future.

I think you can predict what will happen here, eventually. Love conquers all. Love leads to the trysts, the unplanned pregnancy, the living-in

since they're still under age. By the time she and Jun are 18, when they can get married, he'll probably have run off with another girl, another Liza with simple dreams.

My last column was about the Filipinos' lack of a sense of time. With young people, I'd link social alienation to this cavalier attitude to time. The sense that the future is bleak helps us to understand why young people from very poor families will splurge with their first paycheck, get that fancy cellphone or go off with the *barkada* for a night of fun rather than give the money to Nanay to share in the family's expenses. You live for today when there is no tomorrow.

Istambay—standing by idly, as so many young men do—captures so much of this being frozen in the present. There are no jobs now, and the prospects aren't good for tomorrow, so we cling on to the present, finding solace in the *barkada*, in a bottle of beer, in having that special someone.

Some Filipinos are lucky because we eventually get home, feeling safe and secure. More importantly, we have tomorrow to look forward to.

I was at a party the other night with parents who were excited about the release, next month, of the list of students who passed the UP entrance exams. Others were talking about kids graduating this April, and how the family will go off to Hong Kong to celebrate. Our lives are full of things to look forward to, and that's why we can talk about setting priorities, choosing from options, saving for the future.

All that just isn't happening for most Filipinos, and the fact that we've deprived the young of their options, offering nothing except assurances that "God will provide," makes the situation even more tragic.

We pay so much attention to the public approval ratings for our politicians. It's time we sat up and looked at other statistics, such as these YAFS figures on hopelessness among the young, and look for the reasons they feel such alienation and anomie.

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

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The World

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Death penalty opponents hope for wider reforms

CHICAGO—As Illinois begins emptying its death row by order of the governor, opponents of capital punishment are setting their sights on wider reforms, while death penalty supporters are questioning Gov. George Ryan's motives.

On Saturday, Ryan commuted the sentences of all 167 condemned inmates—most to life in prison without parole—saying he felt a moral obligation to act because the system is "haunted by the demon of error."

Opponents of capital punishment praise it as a bold move, and they are holding up the blanket clemency order as an example for the rest of the country to follow.

"It is inevitable that momentum will follow this announcement," said David Elliot, spokesperson for the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. "It's going to reinforce the emerging impression in the minds of the American public that the death penalty system is

fundamentally flawed."

Death penalty supporters, however, say the order was just a smoke screen to deflect attention from a political scandal that was threatening to become the governor's legacy.

Ryan leaves office Monday, one day before opening statements are expected in the racketeering trial of his former chief of staff Scott Fawell and Ryan's campaign committee.

"What an amazing coincidence that he holds this nugget in his pocket until the last moment," Peoria County State's Attorney Kevin W. Lyons said Saturday about Ryan's commutation decision. "Why would he do that?"

"It has nothing to do with death

penalty. It has nothing to do with right or wrong. It has to do with Governor Ryan building a legacy," said Dianne Clements, president of Justice for All, a Texas-based victims advocacy group that supports the death penalty.

Since Ryan took office in 1999, he has been dogged by a federal investigation into the trading of driver's licenses for bribes during the period when he oversaw drivers bureaus as secretary of state.

The scandal has led to the indictments of his friends, top aides and his campaign fund. Although Ryan has not been charged, prosecutors allege that he knew aides were destroying key documents that showed his political offices operated as an arm of his campaign.

US Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald said he knew of only two other campaign committees ever feder-

ally indicted: Richard Nixon's Campaign to Re-Elect the President and the Lyndon Larouche campaign fund.

"As far as I'm concerned, the death penalty has never been the real issue. It's a smoke screen," said Jacqui White, upset that Ryan's move means her sister's murderer will be allowed to live.

But it wasn't just politics that disgusted Ryan's detractors: Judy Puschel said she knew as she prepared to watch the governor's televised speech Saturday that the two men convicted of beating her son and his wife to death with baseball bats in 1983 would be spared from death row.

A few moments before he spoke the words, however, she said she had to leave the room. "I went into the garage and sobbed hysterically," she said.



COMING OF AGE

Dressed up in traditional kimonos, Japanese women aged 20 walk on a street to a ceremony to celebrate Coming-of-Age Day at Toshimaen amusement park in Tokyo, Jan. 13. The number of Japanese who have turned 20, considered the age of maturity in Japan, are estimated at 1.52 million.

AP

Venezuela president threatens to revoke TV licenses

CARACAS, Venezuela—President Hugo Chavez threatened to revoke the broadcasting licenses of Venezuela's main TV and radio stations, accusing them of supporting opposition efforts to overthrow him through a six-week-old strike.

Chavez said Sunday the stations were abusing their power by constantly broadcasting opposition advertisements promoting the strike, which has dried up oil revenue in the world's No. 5 oil exporter but hasn't rattled the president's resolve to stay in power.

Venezuela's main television stations have not broadcast any commercials during the strike except the opposition ads. Media owners say they adopted that stance because Chavez incites his supporters to attack reporters.

"They are worse than an atomic bomb," Chavez said during his weekly radio and television show Sunday. "If they continue to use their licenses to try to break the country or oust the government, I would be obligated to revoke it."

He spoke as tens of thousands

of his opponents marched on Los Proceres park outside the Fort Tiuna military base in Caracas, seeking military support for the strike. Troops lobbed tear gas at the protesters but they quickly regrouped, shouting "cowards" at hundreds of soldiers facing them with armored personnel carriers.

Troops also kept back dozens of Chavez supporters protesting nearby.

The first marchers to arrive at Los Proceres park, which is outside the Fort Tiuna military base,

stomped down barbed wire blocking the entrance, but they did not try to break past security lines.

Hector Castillo, a photographer for the local newspaper El Mundo, was injured by rubber bullets that some soldiers fired into the air, Caracas Fire Chief Rodolfo Briceno said. Eighteen other people were treated for tear-gas asphyxiation, he said.

The park is one of eight security zones in Caracas decreed by Chavez. Protests are banned in those areas unless authorized by the defense ministry.

The military—purged of dissidents after a brief April coup—has supported Chavez during the strike, with troops seizing oil tankers, commandeering gasoline trucks and locking striking workers out of oil installations. Top commanders have professed their loyalty to the government.

In Colombia, Foreign Minister Roy Chaderton dismissed the possibility that Venezuela was heading toward civil war.

"To have a civil war, two (sides) are needed, and the gov-

ernment doesn't want that," Chaderton said. "We are not preparing ourselves for civil war but to preserve peace and reconciliation."

Venezuela's largest labor confederation, business chamber and opposition parties began the strike on Dec. 2 to demand that Chavez resign or call early elections if he loses a nonbinding referendum on his rule.

The National Elections Council scheduled the referendum for Feb. 2 after accepting an opposition petition signed by 2 million people.

AP

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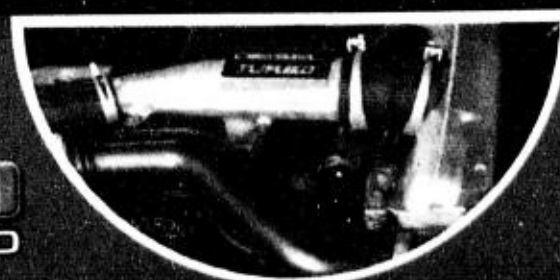
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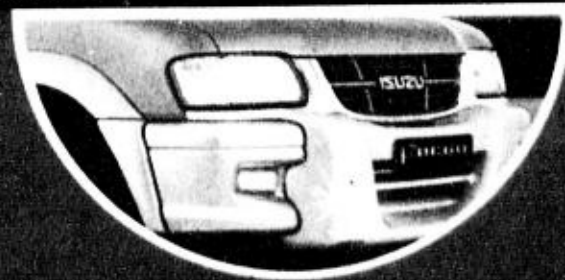
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Saddam to stay on until last Iraqi bullet

BAGHDAD—President Saddam Hussein will stay in Iraq until the last Iraqi bullet is fired, a senior official vowed, as thousands more US troops readied to head for the Gulf region for a possible attack over Baghdad's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

"Saddam Hussein will never leave his country but will stay there until the last Iraqi shot is fired," Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz told the BBC amid growing calls for the Baghdad strongman to stand down and avoid war.

"The danger will be greater for Iraq if the president leaves," Aziz said during a visit to Algiers.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for

the United Nations nuclear watchdog said it would take about a year to complete a credible inspection process in Iraq.

"For a credible inspection process we believe we do need in the vicinity of a year," said Mark Gwozdecky of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) also told the BBC.

"It's a very large country, there is a lot of terrain to cover, a lot of facilities to inspect," Gwozdecky said, adding that in many cases facilities had to be visited repeatedly to make sure they are not being used to make illegal weapons.

This was the long-held position of the IAEA Director General Mo-

hamed ElBaradei, and Hans Blix, head of the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC), Gwozdecky said.

"Given the fairly good access we've been given to date, we can, the longer we're there, have a real role to play in terms of detecting anything illegal," he said.

"Isn't a year worth the wait to get a sustainable, long-term peaceful solution to this problem?"

ElBaradei and Blix are to make a report on Jan. 27 to the UN Security Council on their progress since their weapons experts returned to Iraq two months ago.

But the hawkish chair of the US Defense Policy Board, Richard

Perle, said he thought the inspectors had no chance of finding any weapons of mass destruction.

"Unless the inspectors know exactly where to go the chance that they'll find anything is practically zero," Perle charged. "They've been going back to sites they've visited previously because they don't know where else to go."

"It seems to me that either Saddam will turn over these weapons at the very last minute or there will be military action," Perle warned.

Thousands more troops have been ordered to head for the Gulf region for a possible attack against Iraq, pushing US force

levels above 150,000 by mid-February.

Two sets of deployment orders signed Friday will add 62,000 troops to the massive US troop buildup in the area.

In London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Washington's staunchest ally, was also expected to use his televised monthly press conference to stress that UN weapons inspectors must be given more time and that, if possible, a second UN resolution should be passed to authorize any war in Iraq.

"Our strategy is clear; that process must be allowed to take place fully," a Downing Street

spokesperson was quoted as saying in the press.

According to a poll to be broadcast Monday by ITV television, a majority of Britons believe Saddam does not represent a sufficient threat to justify a war with the country.

It said 58 percent of Britons are not convinced Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction represent a global menace although 61 percent suspect there is a link between Saddam and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terror network.

The poll comes as a further blow for Blair, faced with the prospect of rebellion from within his own Labor party if war is declared. **AFP**

Mahathir: Why Iraq, and not N. Korea?

KUALA LUMPUR—Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said on Monday that Muslims were getting angrier with Washington's cool stance over North Korea's nuclear policy compared to the heat it has put on Iraq.

"Despite the fact that North Korea has admitted that it has nuclear capability, it is not being threatened with war as Iraq is," Mahathir said at the opening of a three-day conference of Asia-Pacific lawmakers in Kuala Lumpur.

"We do not want to see North Korea being threatened with war and the country being militarily attacked but the accommodating attitude towards North Korea is going to anger the Muslims more," Mahathir said.

The leader of the largely Muslim Southeast Asian country is among those who have slammed the United States and Britain for what has been deemed as "double standards" in dealing with Pyongyang and Baghdad.

Mahathir urged policy makers in Asia and the Pacific on Monday to improve global security by befriending North Korea and softening their stance toward Iraq.

Mahathir, speaking to national legislators from 23 Pacific Rim countries, said North Korea had "never been an easy country to deal with," but world powers should resolve fears over Pyongyang's nuclear activities by learning "how to befriend it and get its cooperation."

"Cutting off supplies of food and other necessities will not bring it to its knees," Mahathir told delegates to the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum in Kuala Lumpur. **AP**



SOUTH Korean soldiers patrol during a military exercise in a village in Imjingak on Jan. 13 at the entrance of the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas. US Assistant Secretary of State James Kelly, following talks with South Korea President-elect Roh Moo-hyun, said Washington was ready to negotiate with Pyongyang on the nuclear issue. **AFP**

US willing to consider energy aid to Pyongyang

SEOUL—North Korea might get energy aid from the United States and other countries if it resolves concerns over its nuclear weapons development, a top US envoy said Monday after meeting South Korea's president-elect.

Assistant US Secretary of State James Kelly appeared to be offering an incentive to North Korea to give up its nuclear programs, though he did not say whether his comment represented any change in US policy.

US officials have previously said they would not reward North Korea for abandoning its nuclear programs, and that discussions of aid and better ties can only follow

steps to dismantle those programs.

"Once we get beyond nuclear weapons, there may be opportunities with the US, with private investors, with other countries to help North Korea in the energy area," Kelly said at a news conference in Seoul.

One analyst said the administration of President George W. Bush seemed divided over how to deal with North Korea, with some officials espousing dialogue and others opposing it.

"It seems the hawks and doves have not yet finished tuning their policy," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor of North Korea studies at

Dongguk University in Seoul.

"But fundamentally, Kelly's comments are not really new since they still carry the condition that North Korea must first give up its nuclear programs," Koh said.

North Korea insisted Sunday that it never admitted having a secret nuclear program, sending another conflicting signal in the escalating crisis over its alleged plans to build nuclear weapons.

"The claim that we admitted developing nuclear weapons is an invention fabricated by the US with sinister intentions," South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted the official Rodong Sin-

mun newspaper as saying.

In October, the United States said North Korea had acknowledged having a weapons program. That announcement touched off the latest standoff, which led to North Korea's decision last week to withdraw from the landmark Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

In Seoul, Kelly met President-elect Roh Moo-hyun, who said the North's nuclear development was unacceptable and that the dispute must be resolved through dialogue. The two countries are seeking a common policy approach to North Korea, with the South favoring a softer line. **AP**

WORLD BRIEFS

US pacifists in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A group of American academics who oppose a war with Iraq began a fact-finding and humanitarian mission in Baghdad on Monday saying a conflict was illegal and unnecessary. "US Academics Against the War" has sent 35 people from 28 universities across the United States to Iraq after 30,000 teachers signed a petition to try to persuade President George W. Bush not to unleash a war. "We have come here to establish dialogue, to do a fact-finding mission, to represent the humanitarian aspect of the American public, because we have concern for the people here, for the families, for the children who are going to suffer during any future war," said coordinator James Jennings. "We oppose a war, we think that it constitutes aggression, it is contrary to international law, it will do great damage to the infrastructure and to the people and to the country, it is unwarranted, unnecessary, unwise, it is contrary to the deepest values of the American constitution." **AFP**

'Saddam bin Laden'

SYDNEY—A judge Monday ordered an Australian who claimed to be "Saddam bin Laden" and allegedly threatened to attack a Qantas flight to see a psychiatrist and report to police daily. Malcolm Hodgkinson, 45, was arrested at his home north of Sydney late Sunday after a telephone operator informed police that he had claimed during a call to be a terrorist. A statement of fact tended to a Sydney court Monday said Hodgkinson told four different Telstra phone operators that he was a terrorist and planned various bombings, including a Qantas 747 flight, a major train station and the Telstra building. Magistrate Andrew George found Hodgkinson was not motivated by irresponsibility or malice when he made the phone calls, but by serious cognitive deficiencies caused by head injuries he received in a car accident five years ago. **AFP**

US espionage suspect

WASHINGTON—A retired Air Force master sergeant accused of trying to sell military intelligence to Iraq, Libya and China goes on trial Monday, facing the possibility of becoming the first US espionage suspect to be sentenced to death in more than half a century. Although an 11th-hour plea agreement between the prosecutors and attorneys for Brian Regan could not be entirely ruled out, justice department spokesperson Mark Corallo said he was not aware of such a deal being in the works. **AFP**

Garden memorial to Bali victims

MELBOURNE—A garden memorial to victims of the terrorist bombings on the Indonesian island of Bali opened in the southern city of Melbourne on Monday, three months after the attack. More than 80 relatives and friends of those killed in the Oct. 12 bombings at two nightclubs in Bali gathered near Victoria state's Parliament House for a memorial service to open the site. Thousands of floral tributes that were laid on the steps of the Parliament in the weeks following the terrorist attack were collected and turned into mulch to form the base for the garden. **AP**

7 Palestinians, 2 Israelis die in escalating violence

JERUSALEM—In rapidly escalating violence just two weeks before Israel's general election, seven Palestinians, two of them gunmen who infiltrated an Israeli town, two other Arab attackers and two Israelis were killed in a 24-hour period. Three of the Palestinians and one of the Israelis were civilians.

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz was evasive when asked about reports that he was planning to step up strikes against Palestinian militants. Mofaz said Israel was facing a growing wave of terror, but that there would be "nothing very much out of the ordinary" in Israel's response.

Palestinian officials have ac-

cused Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of escalating military action to deflect attention from corruption allegations that have been hurting his reelection bid. Two Israeli opinion polls indicated Monday that Sharon's Likud party is recovering somewhat from a month-long drop in support.

Palestinian Speaker Ahmed Qureia said Israel prevented him Monday from traveling to Ramallah to open a session of the Palestinian Legislative Council. He said he asked to cross two military checkpoints between his hometown of Abu Dis and Ramallah but did not receive authorization.

"This is a continuation of the Israeli policy to implement the

apartheid system and isolate the Palestinian people from each other," Qureia said. "This is also an indicator of the Israeli intention to paralyze the Palestinian Authority and destroy it completely."

Israel's Cabinet decided last week to limit travel by Palestinian officials as part of its response to suicide bombings in Tel Aviv that killed 23 people.

In two shooting attacks late Sunday, an Israeli civilian and a soldier were killed.

One attack targeted the village of Gadish, in Israel's north, just 4 km from the West Bank. Just after nightfall, two Palestinian gunmen sneaked in and killed a 48-year-old Israeli man. One of the attackers

was run over by an Israeli Army officer, and the second was killed in a shootout. The militant Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility.

It was the second infiltration in the area this month. Residents have been building their own fence on the line with the West Bank, criticizing the Israeli government for moving too slowly in erecting a security barrier.

The Israeli government decided last April to fence off the West Bank, but only a few kilometers of fence have been completed so far. Sharon's main rival, dovish Amram Mitzna of Labor, criticizes Sharon for the slow pace of construction and pledges to draw Israel's border unilaterally if necessary. **AP**

Family of singer Gibb questions treatment

MIAMI—The family of singer Maurice Gibb of the Bee Gees, who died after abdominal surgery at the age of 53, is questioning the hospital's treatment at the time of his death.

Brother Barry Gibb, 55, told the British Broadcasting Corporation late on Sunday BC the family would fight to discover the truth about Maurice's death.

"From the fact that they had to operate on Maurice during the shock of cardiac arrest, is very questionable, and we will pursue every factor, every element, every second of the timeline of the final hours of Maurice's life," Barry Gibb told the BBC.

"We will pursue that relentlessly. That will

be our quest from now on," he said.

The hospital, Mount Sinai Medical Center, had no immediate comment.

Gibb, whose harmonies with his twin, Robin, and older brother Barry helped create one of the best-selling groups of the rock 'n' roll era, collapsed on Thursday at his Miami home after suffering intense stomach pain and was rushed to Mount Sinai Medical Center.

He "experienced cardiac arrest" before his surgery on an intestinal blockage, the hospital said. After the operation and until he died, he was listed in critical but stable condition. **Reuters**



MEMBERS of the Bee Gees show off awards at the American Music Awards in Los Angeles, Ca., in this Jan. 13, 1979 file photo. The brothers Gibb are Barry (left), Maurice and Robin. **AP**

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Subic clubs defy ban on lewd shows

By Allan Macatuno
PDI Central Luzon Desk

SUBIC, Zambales—Several establishments and entertainment spots here continue to display "indecent shows" months after local officials ordered their closure, according to members of a non-government organization here.

Members of the Buklod Center, an Olongapo City-based group helping bar girls in Subic and Olongapo, said at least five nightclubs in Barangay Calapandayan here are offering nude shows to their customers. The bars also employ minors, they said.

Connie Domdom, a Buklod member, said these clubs were ordered closed in September last year after Mayor Jeffrey Khonghun received reports that these were fronts for prostitution.

Domdom said despite Khonghun's order to stop these shows, some nightclubs continued to offer nude shows.

Khonghun said he ordered the police to check reports relayed by Buklod Center.

"It is an old issue that I am trying to solve. I already ordered local police officials to continuously check that information," he said.

"My priority now is to serve people of Subic but still I will not tolerate the existence of indecent shows in my place. If the owners of these nightclubs continue to defy my order, we will not hesitate to close their establishments," Khonghun said.

But Chief Insp. Jerry Sumbad, Subic police chief, said the police have not received reports of nude shows in the town recently.

Ecleo, jailed for wife's slaying, says he'll marry another woman

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—An influential cult leader detained here on charges of murdering his wife had announced plans of marrying a woman who was allowed to sneak into his cell, almost a year after his wife's slaying.

Ruben Ecleo Jr., head of the cult Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) and scion of the Ecleo political dynasty, said "we will marry someday," when asked about the woman who was allowed into his cell.

He, however, declined to give any specific date of his wedding to Sharon San Juan, a member of the PBMA.

Reporters caught San Juan on Sept. 27, 2002 inside a cell specially designed for Ecleo at the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center (BBRC). Curtains kept privacy in Ecleo's cell.

The incident led to the relief of Supt. Lita Quilaton, BBRC jail warden and her deputy, Chief Insp. Oscar Capanas.

Quilaton and Capanas are facing graft charges after Deputy Ombudsman for the Visayas Primo Mira approved the recommendation of Associate Graft Investigator Ed Kangleon.

In his resolution, Kangleon said jail officials had explained that Ecleo was given favors because he was an officer of an inmate organization inside the jail.

But Kangleon noted that the extent of favors given to other inmate-organization officers could

not fairly compare with what Ecleo had availed of.

Ecleo admitted to the INQUIRER that he gave Quilaton a gift—a can of biscuits. He denied he gave money to the former jail warden or to any jail official in exchange for San Juan's stay in his cell.

He said his relationship with San Juan grew after the death of Alona, whose decomposing body was found inside a garbage bag on Jan. 8, 2002 in Dalaguete town, about 85 kilometers from here.

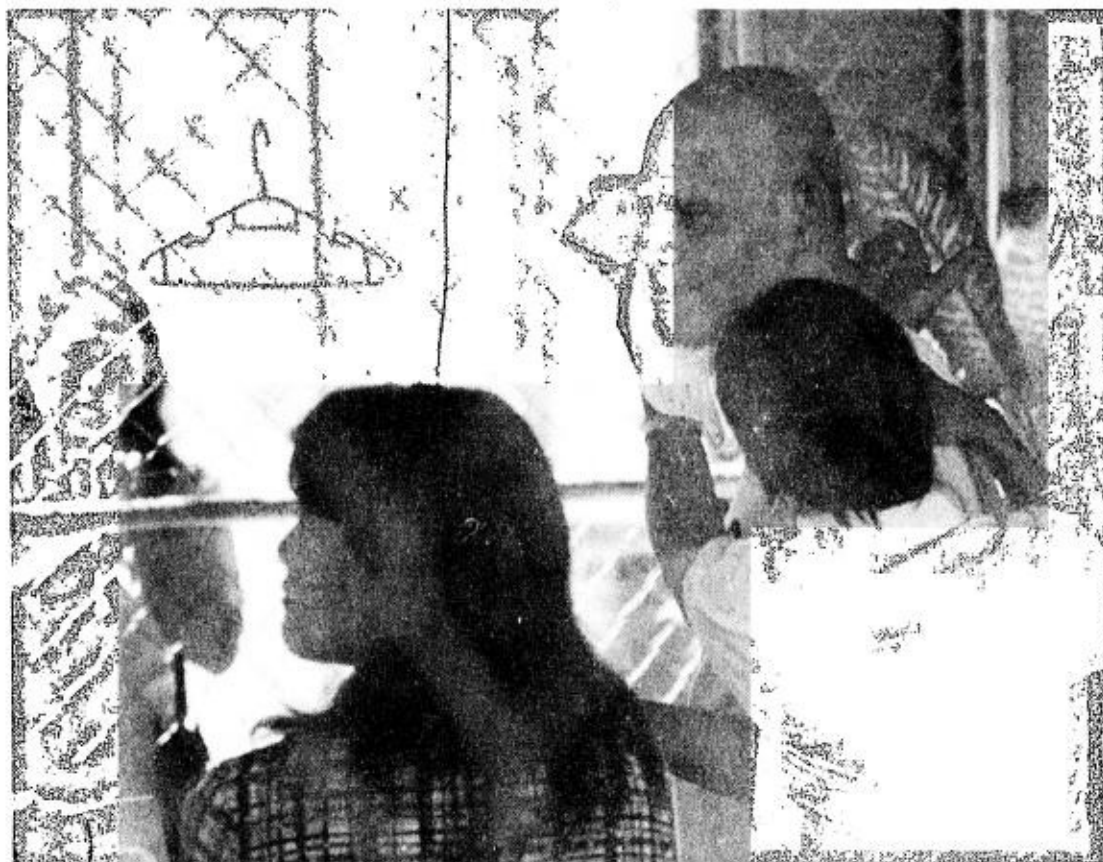
Ecleo denied allegations that San Juan was the reason he killed his wife. He insisted that he did not kill Alona or order the massacre of Alona's parents and siblings in June.

A lone gunman fired at Alona's parents and two siblings in Mandau City, Cebu at the height of the police siege of the Ecleo enclave on Dinagat Island on June 18 to serve the arrest warrant on the cult leader.

Police killed Rico Gumolon, a PBMA member, during a pursuit operation.

Ecleo refused to apologize to the remaining Bacolod siblings. Instead, he said the Bacolods owed him an apology for placing him in jail despite his innocence.

Ecleo granted an interview af-



ATTENTION befitting a cult leader is given to Ecleo after his brief detention at PNP Headquarters in Camp Crame. Ecleo, charged with the murder of his wife, is no stranger to female companions. He has announced plans to marry a woman who was found in his cell.

FILE/DENNIS SABANGAN

ter reports came out that he went out of jail on Friday and stayed in a hotel. Mayor Tomas Osmeña, who received the report, inspected the jail yesterday morning.

But Ecleo told the mayor that it was Ruben Ecleo I, his son from his first wife, who was seen at the hotel's spa.

The young Ecleo was with his grandmother, Surigao del Norte Rep. Glenda Ecleo who stayed at the hotel in Lahug. The congresswoman and Ruben I left for Dinagat Island on Saturday.

Ecleo said he was hurt and saddened by the negative reports

against him. But he said he learned to adjust to life in jail along with some notorious criminals who became his friends.

Ecleo also laughed at plans to test him for mental illness. He maintained that he is still sane although he is sick of pneumonia right now.

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CLEAN AIR ACT

Lack of equipment delays war on pollution

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—The implementation of Republic Act 8947 or the Clean Air Act has been temporarily set aside in Eastern Visayas.

Regional Director Raul Aguilos of the Land Transportation Office (LTO-8) said that their decision not to implement the law was due to two reasons: The non-delivery by their central office of the needed machines that will be used to test vehicles for pollution and the absence of accredited testing centers.

Under the law, vehicles that emit smoke at a density level of more than 64 hertz are considered to be emitting pollutants.

Eastern Visayas has more than 85,000 vehicles with more than 25,000 of them found in Tacloban City, Aguilos said. A vehicle owner has to pay P300 for smoke testing under the same law.

Eastern Visayas is not the only region that has failed to implement the Clean Air Act. It has also been partially suspended in other parts of the country, notably in Metro Manila, due to a

number of reasons. It was supposed to take effect on Jan. 1 this year.

Under this law, no vehicle could be registered without undergoing the mandatory smoke testing. Based on a study, smoke emissions coming from vehicles account for 80 percent of the country's air pollution, Aguilos said.

A violation of this act could mean a penalty of P2,000 up to P3,000, depending on the number of offenses committed, and revocation of driver's license and permit to operate, the LTO-8 regional chief added.

"We will set aside first the implementation of the law. But once the (testing) machines arrive and a testing center has been accredited by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), we will immediately enforce the law," Aguilos said.

Thirteen emission testing machines have been set aside for the region and the first six are expected to arrive anytime this month, Aguilos said.

Hopefully, a testing center would have been accredited by the DTI this month so that the law could be fully imple-

mented by February, Aguilos added.

Dioscoro Molina, monitoring and regulatory division chief of DTI-Leyte, said that for still unknown reasons, there were no applicants, save for one that seeks to put up a testing center in Ormoc City.

Molina admitted that processing the applications for testing centers would not be easy because the DTI in the region has no expertise in determining qualified applicants. "It's our first time to handle this kind of activity. This is too technical," Molina said.

P300,000 in anti-TB medicines found buried

MALAYBALAY CITY—Close to P300,000 worth of anti-tuberculosis (TB) medicines donated by the Italian government to the Philippine government were discovered buried at the back of the Bukidnon Provincial Health Office (PHO) Building here.

Policemen led by PO2 Joseph Galupo excavated 11,820 blister packs of anti-TB medicines from Italy. Pacifico Palamine Jr., supply officer of the Department of Health in Northern Mindanao, estimated the medicines to cost P300,000.

Aside from the Italy-donated anti-TB medicines, 2,565 blister packs of anti-TB medicines, not specifically marked as donated from the Italian government, were also discovered buried in the same site.

Based on the DOH records, the minimum value of each blister pack is P20 and each blister pack contained seven tablets and seven capsules.

Expired

Also buried were 20 bottles with 100 tablets each of sulfadoxine plus pyrimethamine for malaria; 25 bottles of dextrose; 21 blister packs of salbutamol sulfate; six blister packs of anti-bacteria drugs called chloramphenicol; three bottles with 100 tablets each of paracetamol; 22 bottles of Rifampicin syrup; 70 bottles with 100 tablets each ethambutol hydrochloride; 80 bottles of 500 ml liquid from Bioindustries; and 64 empty bottles without labels. The medicines have expiry dates of 1996 and 1997.

Prison guard Edward Gewan led police to the site. Gewan told the Inquirer that sometime in 1997, Nemesia Babanto, coordinator of the National Tuberculosis Program (NTP) in Bukidnon, requested Gewan to escort four prisoners while they bury the expired medicines with several PHO personnel witnessing it.

Dr. Inocentes Dagohoy, provincial health officer, denied any involvement.

But some PHO workers said assistant to then PHO officer Dr. Jose Cabugwas, Dagohoy was in charge of monitoring the NTP program.

Dagohoy said there was "an oversupply of anti-TB drugs."

He added that the donated medicines arrived a few months before their expiration.

Dagohoy even boasted that PHO Bukidnon was given a "recognition award" by the Center for Health and Development in Northern Mindanao "for outstanding implementation of the National Tuberculosis Program for 2001-2002."

Oversupply

Gov. Jose Zubiri repeated Cabugwas' statement that there was an oversupply of anti-TB medicines.

Based on records, the PHO of Bukidnon, through its former supply officer Milla Tlanduca, received P374,270 worth of anti-TB medicines from Italy.

Some of the medicines were manufactured in August 1993 with an expiry date of August 1995. The others were manufactured in September 1993 with an expiry date of September 1995.

The provincial auditor's office said it has no record of any request from the PHO for the disposal of the medicines.

The Government Auditing Code of the Philippines provides that pieces of government property that are useless may be destroyed in the presence of officials.

In 2001, TB was sixth in the leading causes of death in Bukidnon. That same year, 163 people died from TB. From 1996 to 2000, the average number of people who died of TB was 159. Ellen Red, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Blast hurts boy

SAN JOSE DEL MONTE CITY—Two boys were hurt after a pillbox that they were playing with exploded in Barangay Minuyan here on Friday. Police said the victims, Jayson Bernabe and Jamrick Sarmienta, both 7, were taken to the Jose Reyes Memorial Hospital in Manila for treatment of severe burns. Reports said the boys were playing in a backyard in their village when they found the pillbox hidden in a culvert. The boys, who did not know that what they found was a homemade bomb, retrieved the pillbox and played with it until it exploded. Police are investigating a 16-year-old neighbor of the victims who is suspected of hiding the pillbox in the culvert.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

NPA rebel poseur

BOCAUE, Bulacan—Police arrested a man posing as a New People's Army rebel after he extorted money from residents in Barangay Taal here. Emmanuel Eserjose, 34, yielded P2,500 in marked bills when arrested by policemen in an entrapment operation last week. Businesswoman Terecita Flores, 41, reported Eserjose's activities to the police after the suspect asked her money for at least six times. Supt. Tommy Cabilgas, Bocaue police chief, said Eserjose had already collected almost P15,000 from Flores. Cabilgas said an armed Eserjose would go to the houses of wealthy residents and introduce himself as an NPA rebel. He would then demand at least P2,500 and would threaten them if they report his activities to the police.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Robbers hijack vans

CAMP GENERAL ALEJO SANTOS, Bulacan—More than P400,000 worth of goods were lost to highway robbers in two separate hijacking incidents in Bulacan and Nueva Ecija. Police said more than P100,000 worth of assorted snack food loaded in a delivery van was hijacked by armed men along the national highway in Barangay Sta. Rita in San Miguel, Bulacan on Wednesday midnight. On Thursday morning, police said the same group of suspects hijacked a ten-wheel cargo truck along the Maharlika Highway in Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija. The truck was bound for Isabela and was carrying boxes of bath soap, toilet paper, detergents and engine spareparts worth more than P300,000.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Teens killed in crash

SAN MIGUEL, Bulacan—Two teenagers were killed Tuesday when their van smashed into a Manila-bound bus on the Cagayan Valley Road in Barangay Tikpalas here, police said. Killed were Ferdinand Cruz, 19, and Gerald Tapal, 17. Police said Cruz, who was driving the van, tried to overtake a vehicle and collided with a Baliuag Transit Bus.

Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Drug pusher killed

TAAL, Batangas—Benito Sandoval, a suspected drug pusher was killed in a sugarcane plantation where he ran for cover from pursuing cops in Barangay Gahol of this town on Friday. Provincial police director Sr. Supt. Rodolfo Magtibay said the suspect was about to be arrested by joint forces of the intelligence and investigation group and the Taal police after two search warrants for illegal drugs and illegal possession of firearms when Sandoval evaded arrest and shot back at the apprehending policemen. The arresting team retaliated and hit Sandoval on his left leg and right forehead. The suspect was pronounced dead on arrival at the Polymedic Hospital, also in this town.

Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Pilferage group nabbed

BATANGAS CITY—Police caught a pilferage syndicate inside the Batangas Gas Refilling Plant along Barangay Soro-Soro Karsada of this city on Wednesday while pilfering liquefied petroleum gas. Batangas City police chief Supt. Restito Hernandez identified the arrested suspects as Bernabe Ansale, 29, plant operator; Reynald Tuazon, 30, and Russel Mindoro, 25, both plant refillers. The three were all stay-in workers at the plant. City and provincial police caught the suspects in the act of unloading about 300 kilos of LPG from a cargo truck owned by Hino Lorry Trucking. The pilfered LPG was then refilled into empty LPG tanks or cylinders.

Mei Magsino, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Japanese found dead

BACODOR, Cavite—A Japanese national was found dead lying along NIA Road in this town Sunday night, police said. Investigators said the victim was 5'11" in height and wearing a striped T-shirt and brown pants. He sustained lacerated wounds on the head that caused his death. The corpse was brought to Funeral Mesina for autopsy. Fausto Tatad Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



TROOP VISIT

Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes meets with a wounded Special Forces soldier in a military hospital in Zamboanga City Jan. 12. The soldier was among those wounded when the military attacked a suspected base of terrorists in Sulu.

REUTERS

Most Bohol HR violation cases filed vs Army

TAGBILARAN CITY—A total of 87 cases of alleged human rights violations were filed before the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) Bohol field office last year.

A report prepared by Rito Montes Jr., officer in charge of CHR-Bohol, showed that the Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP)-Karapatan filed most, or 60, of the cases.

Of the 87 cases, 64 cases were filed in July, most by the militant group, in the aftermath of the joint Philippine Army-Philippine National Police (PNP) raid of a residence in Candasis, Balilihan on May 8, 2002.

In that raid, the joint Army-PNP

team arrested eight suspected rebels, three of them minors, including a girl. An elderly woman, Cecilia Tambis, 70, in whose house the suspected rebels had taken refuge, was critically injured after she was shot in the legs and right arm. She lost her right leg.

Most of the TFDP-Karapatan cases were on harassment.

Out of the total 62 harassment victims including those not filed by TFDP, 31 complained of grave and verbal abuse; 15, illegal interrogation; seven, forced evacuation; five, forced surrender and others complained of illegal search, sexual harassment, illegal dismissal and abuse

of authority.

For violations of the Child Abuse Law, CHR-Bohol received one complaint each for rape, acts of lasciviousness, neglect and support, negligence, gross negligence, physical injuries, legal support and harassment.

Three physical injury cases were filed by battered wives while a similar number of complaints were received over shooting.

The report said 55 human rights victims never showed up when invited to the CHR office to substantiate the complaints that were filed on their behalf. Chito Fuentes, PDI Visayas Bureau

Farmers cling to coconut as income source

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—While the coconut industry in Bohol faces serious problems, it still remains a viable source of livelihood for most of the province's farmers.

This claim was made in a concept paper prepared by Bali Farms and Crops Research Center submitted to the provincial government.

Bali Farms, a Cagayan de Oro-based research and production institution, and the Bohol-based People's Fair Trade Assistance Center, is proposing a program for the "massive, comprehensive and sustained rehabilitation, expansion and development of the co-

conut industry in Bohol."

The center is offering its expertise and resources to serve as one of the main catalysts for the development of the coconut sector.

It offers assistance in the introduction of high-yielding and early-maturing coconut hybrids and "the most modern farm production technologies" in facilitating the development of new products and coconut-based industries.

High-yielding varieties include those certified by the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) that bear flowers and fruits starting on the 18th and 30th months after planting.

If promoted and distributed, the paper claimed that five years after planting,

they would be yielding four to six tons of nuts per hectare per year, "up to six times the present average production," which is half to two tons per hectare per year.

The center said that among the technologies it will promote is the intercropping of fruit trees, annuals (such as bananas), and cash crops with the coconut trees.

"This shall maximize the use of the land planted to coconut, while at the same time provide interim and supplementary income to the farms," the paper noted.

It also offered the propagation of modern coconut farm management practices, including organic fertilizer production and usage.

"This ensures fast growth of palms and trees, while reducing the cost of

farm inputs," the paper said.

It pointed out that the development of organic coconut sugar production could mean a big increase in the income of coconut farmers.

The paper noted that coconut sugar, or muscovado, from coconut has a high nutritive value. It is derived from coconut toddy (or the coconut wine without the dregs).

Aside from sugar, the center identified other products that can be developed from coconut, such as virgin oil (a high value product from coconut), oleo chemicals (from coconut crude oil) and consumer products like coco nectar soup, coco sap concentrates (100 percent fruit juice sweetener) and many others.

Erap 'bombshells' expected in Senate testimony today

From page A1

lic enterprises, chaired by Sen. John Osmeña, Pardo said it was only the Department of Justice's opinion of then Secretary Hernando Perez in early 2001 that gave "financial closure" to the contract.

He denied that the Estrada administration had granted a direct government guarantee to Impsa.

Pardo and former National Power Corp. president Federico Puno testified that the Government Acknowledgment and Consent Agreement (Gaca) signed during the Estrada administration only carried with it an "indirect government guarantee."

Direct guarantee

Under Osmeña's questioning, Pardo said Perez's DOJ opinion had inserted a direct guarantee provision. (This assertion was not included in Pardo's opening statement, which he released to the media.)

Osmeña then pointed out that a direct government guarantee meant that should the Napocor default on its payments to Impsa, collections on these debts would directly be issued to the National Treasury for payment.

"That's the big difference, that is that the change that I presumed was what Impsa wanted all along," he said.

He said that Perez, who assumed office just hours after Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was installed President by Edsa II, "added on a paragraph when he rendered an opinion on Jan. 24, 2001, and converted the indirect guarantee to a direct guarantee."

"This is against the law and is prohibited under the build-operate-transfer law. That is why what Secretary Perez did was against the law," Osmeña said.

But a statement from CBK Power Co. said "Impsa loans are not, and never have been, guar-

anteed by either Napocor or the national government."

When the hearing resumes this morning, Estrada is expected to testify that he had been offered by Mark Jimenez, the man he had called a "corporate genius" and whom he once appointed a presidential adviser, a \$14-million bribe just to approve the Impsa deal during his administration.

Osmeña said that in today's hearing, "we will know [if] Congressman Mark Jimenez really offered \$14 million [to Perez to endorse the Impsa deal]."

Timing questioned

But Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, a cousin of the committee chair, asked why the "finishing touches" to the contract had to be rushed in the last few days of the Estrada administration.

"(The Estrada officials) could not explain why they were rushing it," he said.

He noted that it was highly questionable that the Gaca was signed on Dec. 18, 2001 and then again on Dec. 28.

Secretary Vincent Perez said he did not find anything anomalous in the contract. Contrary to Estrada's claim, he said the contract does not bind the government to "guarantee" Impsa's loans in case of default.

"The question is, why is this [Senate] hearing being undertaken again? Why now? If then President Estrada had a question about [the contract], why is he appearing only now, two years later? I think that's the question that should be asked," Perez said.

When he assumed office as energy secretary in June 2001, Perez said he had an independent firm from New Zealand evaluate the extent of the work done by Impsa.

"They said the work that was done justifies payments to the contractors. We inherited this contract, we preserve and respect the sanctity of contracts and since they have

performed their obligations, we have to pay them," he said.

The project is expected to be completed in April.

Diaz, who is presidential adviser for Western Visayas, said he found it funny that Estrada should be contesting a contract that was approved under his watch.

"Clearly, the entire transaction happened mostly under the time of President Estrada, so it's funny he says now that there's a problem with it," said Diaz, a former congressman.

"But then again we don't know. That's during his watch. So he may want to reveal something under his watch, that's his prerogative."

Gutierrez again defended her former boss, Hernando Perez, for issuing a "hasty" legal opinion dated Jan. 24, 2001. She said the former justice secretary actually issued the opinion on Feb. 1, 2001, after a week of consultations.

She said the department simply presumed regularity in all the agreements signed during the previous administration.

"The DOJ does not make findings on the propriety, reasonableness or political implications of the contract since that's up to the economic managers," Gutierrez said.

Erap prepared

After waiting almost a month, Estrada is expected to be better prepared for the Senate hearing.

The jailed ex-President is expected to repeat earlier media statements that he had turned down a bribe offer made sometime in 1999 by Jimenez, then the deal's broker.

Sandiganbayan court sheriff Ed Urieta said Estrada would be escorted out of his detention suite at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center at around 8 a.m. Estrada's time of return to the VMMC will depend on the length of the hearing, he added. With reports from Volt Contreras and TJ Burgonio



MEMBERS of the National Union of Students in the Philippines stage a mock boxing match between Senators Edgardo Angara and Franklin Drilon, and President Macapagal as referee. The students called for a stop to endless politicking and denounced the neglect of urgent reforms for the youth sector. JESS YUSON

Edong does a Gloria

From page A1

that he was not interested in running for president in 2004.

"I have always thought that I will not run. I think my public service record is enough," he told reporters.

Asked by a reporter if he was willing to put his declaration in writing, Angara said: "How can we change the psychology of this nation (if there is so much distrust)?"

"We need change," said Angara, president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), the biggest opposition party, which the President had invited to "some kind of a coalition."

At the 6th Conference of the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines (Focap), Angara said he would not even run for Vice President.

He claimed that he had subordinated all his political ambitions to end the divisiveness caused by too much politics. He said he would not even accept a government position offered by the President in exchange for his support.

"I will be happy to continue being a senator until 2007. I will not run for President or for Vice President. Being Senate president is not even on the agenda. My primary concern is to help implement changes that would improve the psychology of Filipinos," Angara told reporters after his speech before the Focap.

The senator said it would be up to the opposition to choose its presidential candidate for the 2004 elections, whether it was movie actor Fernando Poe Jr., Sen. Panfilo Lacson or somebody else.

Angara said the LDP had been informed of his decision to drop out of the 2004 presidential race this early.

Still, House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla said he was surprised by the announcement.

"It's unfortunate that a person of his caliber would abandon any

intention to run for the presidency," Padilla told reporters.

Asked how Estrada would view his decision not to run for the 2004 polls, Angara said his party was independent from Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino.

"We have to take advantage of this momentum of a changed political atmosphere to push President Macapagal-Arroyo's reform agenda forward. We cannot afford to lose a single day. There should be a sense of urgency in getting our political acts together," Angara said.

On Dec. 30, Ms Macapagal shocked the nation when she announced that she would not seek election to a full term. She said she would instead focus on reforms to move the country forward.

Angara noted that he had been in public service for 25 years, from being a delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention, president of the University of the Philippines, to Cabinet member and senator.

'No hidden agenda'

Angara said he had assured his colleague in the opposition that there was no hidden agenda in his meetings with the President.

"The insinuations that I have struck a deal with the President on Charter change, on no elections, on the Senate presidency are absolutely without basis. I call that malicious falsehood," he said.

Opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the Senate minority, after holding a caucus, "was taking (Angara's) word for it that no deals had been made."

"His explanation (during the caucus) is a welcome explanation," Pimentel said.

Angara revealed that sometime during the first week of December, "two common friends of the President and myself came to the Senate ... to invite me to meet with the President."

He said he was told that the

agenda for the meeting was only "about legislation."

Angara confirmed that he and the President met on Dec. 20 and "discussed exclusively her desire to get some of the legislation pending in the Senate passed."

He mentioned the proposal to create the National Transmission Corp. (Transco), which would privatize the transmission lines of the National Power Corp., and the proposed Securitization Act.

LDP program

"We did not discuss Charter change, we did not discuss the issue of the Senate presidency and, absolutely, there was no link (to these) during our meeting and any of this incident," Angara said.

He said he got another invitation to meet with the President on Jan. 7. At the meeting, Ms Macapagal was "more specific" on the legislation she wanted passed, according to Angara.

Angara said the President had told him that she would be calling "for a meeting of the congressional leaders and I hope you will agree to attend." The meeting is set for today in Malacañang.

"My party [LDP] supports the legislative program that will ultimately be drafted," he said.

Angara said the LDP position was "consistent with our record that in times of need, [the] LDP, as a political party, has always been a reformist party."

But he said he would support moves to review the Charter this early and support plans to shift to a parliamentary form of government.

"My support for Charter change does not mean I favor changing the form of government before 2004. I am all for pushing ahead with the 2004 elections because I believe we still need one more administration as a transition before changing the form of government," he said. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Estrada lawyers say plunder ...

From page A1

lawyer Prospero Crescini said "she should keep her mouth shut with regard to this case because it's outside her jurisdiction."

To Crescini and Estrada's three other court-appointed lawyers, the President's statement was exerting "undue influence" on the special Sandiganbayan division hearing their client's four criminal cases, including the capital offense of plunder.

"It was very improper for her to say that. She should not interfere with the proceedings of the court," Crescini said.

In the first place, it would be "impossible" for the trial to end by 2004 because the defense panel would still have to present "around 80 witnesses" to get Estrada acquitted, Crescini told reporters.

Asked by the INQUIRER what he thought would be a more realistic timetable for the trial, Crescini replied: "It may take until 2005."

The prosecution of Estrada began 21 months ago with the filing of criminal charges with the anti-graft court by then Ombudsman Aniano Desierto. Estrada and co-accused son Jinggoy were arrested on April 25, 2001, but their trial for plunder did not start until Oct. 1 that year.

"I hope the President was misquoted," said another Estrada lawyer, Manuel Pamaran, "because that [wish] would be prejudicial to the defense."

Pamaran said the defense should be extended the same "lux-

ury of time" enjoyed by the prosecution panel, which, he noted, had already spent "19 months" in presenting its witnesses.

Pressure?

"If we try to finish this by 2004, it's already a form of persecution," said co-defense counsel Noel Malaya.

Raymund Fortun, a former private lawyer of Estrada now serving as his spokesperson, said Ms Macapagal's wish constituted an "attack" on the court's independence.

"Clearly, her prime design is to pressure the Sandiganbayan into convicting President Estrada to solidify her control of the presidency," Fortun said.

She just wanted to "unburden herself of the problems which she herself created when she became part of a military-civilian conspiracy to unseat a duly elected President through unconstitutional means," he said.

Based on the number floated by Crescini, pro-Estrada witnesses purportedly being lined up by the defense will outnumber prosecution witnesses.

Among the 80 or so witnesses for Estrada's defense are Commission on Audit officials, presidential security personnel and others connected with the provincial government of Ilocos Sur.

The witnesses are primarily meant to discredit the defense star witness, former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, who had

tagged Estrada as a big-time collector of *jueteng* payola and recipient of P130 million in kickbacks from tobacco excise tax revenues.

Crescini admitted that the defense counsels, who maintained that they were not being paid by Estrada since taking over the case in March last year, had sought help from Estrada's dismissed private counsels in looking for witnesses.

State prosecutors, who called in their 63rd witness yesterday, said they would present "six to nine more" witnesses before wrapping up their presentation.

Yesterday's hearing saw prosecutors applying finishing touches to their presentation of evidence.

Manuel Barcena, vice president of the Philippine Clearing House Corp. (PCHC), was called to the stand mainly to confirm the PCHC's processing of checks deposited in the infamous "Jose Velarde" account, the alleged secret account held by Estrada to stash away ill-gotten money.

CORRECTION

IN yesterday's headline story, "GMA wish: Estrada trial to end by 2004," by Amanda Doronila, the "Postscript" incorrectly mentioned Rigoberdo Tiglaog as head of the Presidential Management Staff (PMS). The head of PMS is Silvestre Afable Jr. Tiglaog is the chief of staff of the Office of the President.



CALAMIAN deer, endemic in the Philippines, can only be found on a few islands in the northern tip of Palawan. PEDRITO ENSOMPO/SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

US sending back rare RP deer

From page A1

logical Society of San Diego, William Oliver, director for Flora and Fauna International, said several Calamian deer would be sent back after the successful completion of a study involving a showcase and breeding of endangered animals.

The Zoological Society of San Diego, which conducted the study, is dedicated to the conservation of endangered species and their habitats, and engages in conservation and research work around the globe.

It manages the 40.5-hectare (100-acre) world-famous San

Diego Zoo, the 729-hectare (1,800-acre) San Diego Wild Animal Park and the Center for Reproduction of Endangered Species.

The Calamian deer population in the San Diego Zoo is said to have increased as a result of breeding from the original wildlife taken from Busuanga.

The deer will be transported to the Philippines in an aircraft. Other details of the trip have yet to be finalized.

In anticipation of their return, a memorandum of agreement is being prepared for signing among the Zoological Society of San Diego, the Natural Resources Development Corp., which super-

vises the PWRRC; and the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development, a policy-making body for environmental protection in Palawan.

The Zoological Society of San Diego will shoulder the expenses for the caging of the animals, while the PWRRC will handle maintenance work.

Endangered

The Calamian deer has been classified as endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the world's oldest and largest body for species conservation, since 1994. It is found only in Culion,

Busuanga and a few other islands in the Calamianes group in the northern tip of Palawan.

In 1979, its population was estimated to reach 900, but it is feared to have declined to more than half today because of continued forest denudation and hunting for food.

The Calamian deer is also called the Calamian hog deer, Cerf-cochon Calamien, Ciervo de los Calamianes, Ciervo Porquerizo de los Calamianes and the Philippine deer. It is called hog deer because of the animal's habit of crashing through the undergrowth with its head down like a wild pig, and of leaping over obstacles like other deer.

FOUR DIGIT

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(In exact order)
SUERTRES
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MEGALOTTO 6/45

4 6 13 20 44

SPORTS

Editor AIS. Mendoza • Assistant Editor Edwin M. Villanueva

SPORTS TV Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Challenge, 5:30 p.m. (r), ESPN
Houston vs Boston, 9:30 a.m. (r - 10 p.m.), Solar Sports
World Pro Basketball
AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Blast, 9 a.m., ESPN
NFL Super Bowl Highlights, 9:30 a.m. and 4 p.m., ESPN
NFL Divisional Playoffs, 8:30 p.m. (r), ESPN

THREE-YEAR CONTRACT

Alaska: P8.7-M deal to Cortez



ENRICO Villanueva, the UAAP MVP last year for playing a key role in Ateneo's climb to the championship, is all smiles after he was picked by Batang Red Bull during Sunday's PBA Draft. Talks are rife about negotiations for his transfer to Shell via trade. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By June Navarro

FOR a top rookie pick like Mike Cortez, Alaska thinks the former De La Salle University star point guard is worthy of a multi-million peso offer sheet.

The Aces yesterday dangled a three-year, P8.7-million pact to the 6-foot-6 Cortez a day after 40 rookies were selected in the PBA Draft.

"Mike (Cortez) has the skills commensurate to his true worth. So we didn't think twice in offering him the contract," said Alaska team manager Joaqui Trillo.

The 22-year-old Cortez, who led the Green Archers to two UAAP titles (2000-2001) and is being heralded as the second coming of ace playmaker Johnny Abarrientos, stands to receive a maximum rookie salary of P150,000 each month for the 2003 season.

Cortez will enjoy a 50-percent wage increase on the succeeding years: P225,000 a month in 2004 and P350,000 a month in 2005.

All drafted players could possibly receive the maximum rookie salary of P150,000 regardless of their ranking in the drafting order.

The teams wield the power to dictate the salaries of the rookies as long as they fall within the salary cap.

Rommel Adducul, the second pick overall, has no offer yet from Barangay Ginebra but Adducul's manager Ed Ponceja sees bright

prospects for his client to get a viable contract from the Kings.

First-rounders Eddie Laure (third, Shell), Fil-American Harvey Carey (fourth, Talk N' Text), Fil-Am Brandon Cablay (fifth, Alaska), Billy Mamaril (Purefoods), Enrico Villanueva (Red Bull), Marlon Legaspi (SMB), Reynel Hugnatan (Coca-Cola) and Jimmy Alapag (Talk N' Text) have also not received offer sheets yet.

Shell team manager Bobby Kanapi said the Turbochargers would offer the 6-foot-3 Laure a deal before the week ends.

So with the 6-foot-6 Mamaril, whose father, ex-PBA beanpole Romulo Mamaril, acts as his manager.

Purefoods team manager Rene Pardo assured Mamaril's inclusion into the Hotdogs lineup also at the end of the week.

Talk N' Text is in the process of evaluating its lineup with the contracts of rookies Fil-Americans Harvey Carey and Jimmy Alapag still up in the air, according to team alternate governor Al Panlilio.

Teams have until Jan. 17 to sign up the rookies of their choice.

Otherwise, the drafted rookies will automatically become free agents.

Meanwhile, defensive specialist Junthy Valenzuela got a fresh two-year pact with Batang Red Bull, Bryan Gahol is set to renew his ties with San Miguel Beer for another year while Alaska is inclined to keep Jon Ordonio this season for P120,000 a month.

Ucap derby today

AFTER the smashing

success of the Ucap International 9-Cock Derby, Mandaluyong Coliseum presents the "3rd Ucap 7-Cock Derby" today and on Thursday, Jan. 14 and 16. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan Mite Free Shampoo and Washout Shampoo.

More than 50 fights are lined-up in this event being hosted by Patrick Antonio and engineer Sonny Lagon of Cebu.

With topnotch cockers and breeders from all over the country competing, aficionados can again expect fierce competition from start to finish.

Early favorites include newspaper publisher Butch Macasaet and Jimmy Cody of Alabama, who are fresh from ruling the Ucap International 9-Cock Derby last week; Pol Estrellado, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Bobby Wong, lawyer Ram Lopez, Ucap president Raymond Velayo, Biboy Enriquez, Mario Villamor, Pol Estrellado, OPMI president Raymond Velayo, Biboy Enriquez, Mario Villamor, Pol Estrellado, OPMI president Vic Yu, Gov. Ito Ynares.

For inquiries, contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 534-2341.

Archers force KO game; Dazz subdues Blu in OT

GAME ON THURSDAY (Makati Coliseum)
4 p.m.—ICTSI vs LBC

By Dennis U. Eroa

ICTSI-La Salle found LBC-Batangas in its worst form ever as it posted a whopping 40-point victory, 79-39, last night, forcing a knockout game in the PBL Challenge Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

The Green Archers greeted the Blades with a 25-4 first quarter lead and sustained their fiery form till the end of the one-sided match.

With the win, ICTSI will meet LBC anew on Thursday for the fourth and final semis seat. If the Archers win, they need to beat formidable Welcoat twice in the crossover semis to make it to the finals.

Later, Cyrus Baguio's jumper with 0.7 second left gave Dazz an 85-83 overtime win over Blu. Dazz now enjoys a twice-to-beat advantage over Blu in their semis battle.

Alex Compton typified LBC's uninspired stand as he groped for form throughout. Compton

scored the Blades' first basket before going scoreless which took the fight out of his teammates.

Known as LBC's heart and soul, Compton saw action for 25 minutes, going 3 of 11 from the field. His teammates did not fare any better as LBC converted just 16 of 80 attempts from the field, worse than the 14 of 59 attempts made by Ateneo against Blu last June 21, 2002.

The Archers also controlled the boards, 54-45.

The peppery Rob Johnson sank a triple, giving ICTSI a 61-26 bulge, 1:20 left in the third period. The Archers, however, didn't lower their guards as they continue to torment the Blades with a no-nonsense defense.

SCORES:

ICTSI-LA SALLE 79—Yap 18, Cardona 16, Ferrer 12, Johnson 9, Dacia 8, Uy 5, Yeo 4, Manalo 3, Franco 2, Hugnatan 2, Ramos 0, Valino 0, Gavino 0, Sta. Maria 0.
LBC-BATANGAS 39—Mappayo 9, Reguera 4, Capati 4, Rivera 4, De Castro 4, Manabat 3, Baguion 3, Compton 2, Roldan 2, San Diego 2, Cuevas 2, Uy 0, Caceres 0.
Quarters: 25-4, 41-15, 61-29, 79-39

Top pick or not, salary's the same

June Navarro

UNLIKE in the National Basketball Association where the wages of rookies are determined according to their ranking in the Draft, all PBA rookies could get the maximum allowable salary regardless of their position in the Draft order.

It means that even if a rookie landed as the 40th pick overall, he could still receive the maximum rookie salary of P150,000 a month.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala confirmed that the salaries of rookies are subject to the

judgment of the teams as long as it stays within the salary cap.

"The maximum salary of P150,000 for rookies applies equally to all," Eala told the INQUIRER.

As it is, rookies who were selected late in the Draft could receive the maximum rookie salary and enjoy the perks similar to what top picks Mike Cortez (Alaska) and Rommel Adducul (Ginebra) will get.

In the NBA, first-rounders, especially the top pick, take pleasure in fetching a deal far more lucrative than the rookies selected in the second and third rounds of the Draft.

Beach volley registry open

ONE of the country's most anticipated outdoor event for the summer gives more college students a chance to join in the fun.

The 7th Nestea Beach Volley University Championships extends its deadline for submission of entries nationwide to Jan. 15.

Interested parties may submit their entries, consisting of an event entry form, personal data sheets of the players and proof of enrollment, to Ms. Corex Bartilart of Rapp Collins at 11/F JMT Bldg., ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City or call 633-7429. Be part of the excitement and have an active, enjoyable summer with Nestea.

Agassi beats fellow American, 7-5, 6-3, 6-3

MELBOURNE—Second seed Andre Agassi wasted no time brushing aside fellow American Brian Vahaly, 7-5, 6-3, 6-3, at the Australian Open on Monday.

The three-time champion took just over two hours to advance to the second round where he will meet South Korea's Lee Hyung-taik, who won his first ATP title in Sydney at the weekend.

Agassi was unable to defend his title here last year because of a wrist injury and looked thrilled to be back on court, blasting 36 clean winners past Vahaly.

"To be back here... there is a lot of nerves," Agassi said courtside afterwards. "It's been a while." Looking forward to Wednesday's match, Agassi added: "He's been playing some great tennis and is a great ambassador

for tennis in that part of the world -- I look forward to the challenge.

"Every match needs to get better so let's get started now." Reuters

Venus prevails, too

MELBOURNE—While Serena Williams was pummeling opponents in Perth and telling the world she wants to remain unbeaten in 2003, elder sister Venus was toiling away behind the scenes, patiently honing the game that brought her four grand slam crowns.

On Monday the fruits of her labor were on show at Melbourne Park and the world number two, seeded second here behind Serena, disposed of Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-4, 6-2 to reach the second round of the Australian

7-5, 6-3, 6-3

Open.

It was not all one-way traffic, but once Venus had shook off the ring-rustiness caused by two months away from competitive action she demolished the gifted Russian.

It was a performance of power and precision, and one which could see her rejoin the grand slam holders' fold having relinquished her Wimbledon and U.S. Open crowns to Serena last year.

"I've been practicing... hanging out... living life," she giggled when asked of her preparations. "I was just a little rusty out there but at times I was my old self."

"I was rushing and then I realized 'Venus, slow down and you'll be okay'. You know, I didn't expect to be 100 percent in this match but next match I'll be 150." Reuters

It happens all the time; Kanor in town

THE UNCERTAINTY of a cager's destiny was proven again on Sunday when the PBA held its Draft at the Glorietta. Kenneth Duremdes seeing himself moved from Alaska to Sta. Lucia Realty and Enrico Villanueva going to Red Bull instead of Shell were but only two of the shockers that attended the occasion.

If you were stunned by those, then you still belong to the "babes in the woods" in the dense forest of this basketball republic. Sadly, you know little about a player's true fate.

To the uninitiated, or in case you have forgotten, the PBA, aside from being purely a tool of giant companies to earn huge profits yearly in the guise of providing an entertainment show to the public, is the nation's No. 1 anesthesiologist to the downtrodden who endlessly seek solace to the thrill of an acrobatic shot. To the rich and the feeling-rich, if not the nouveau riche, the PBA is simply therapy; except to soothe tired bones and relax those weary minds, they find no redeeming social values in the league.

Anyone saying the participants in the

show are the happiest of the lot---what with their gargantuan salaries and all---is absolutely wrong. For, how can a puppet enjoy what he is told to do?

I think it's time once again to recall what Francis Arnaiz, one of the best point-guards ever to dribble that ball, had said a while back: "We are but por kilo in the PBA."

Even Norman Black, fired recently as Sta. Lucia Realty's head coach, takes that to heart I believe. If not, he'll not be able to recover from the shock of his sacking---happening as it did just two days after New Year's Day.

Like the PBA Draft, it happens not only yearly but all the time---this sacking/trading of players and coaches in the PBA, and even in other leagues like the PBL, UAAP and NCAA. The trick is to learn to ride with the punches.

As the great writer, the National Artist Nick Joaquin, said: "Pektus, pare."

Tomorrow is the deadline for NBN-4 to produce the Letter of Credit to finally sig-

nify its willingness to air the PBA games starting this year. Why the PBA Board gave the government station two extensions to produce the LC is a puzzle waiting to be solved.

What gives?

Anyway, should NBN-4 fail to deliver again tomorrow, will PBA chair Butch Alejo make true his promise to finally throw in the towel and recall the group of Bobong Velez to a new round of talks regarding the league's new TV franchise?

Just asking.

Pino "Kanor" Tegasantos is in town vacationing from his base in Honolulu, Hawaii. One of the idols of my youth, Kanor was an original mentor. It was through him that I first heard the music of Xavier Cugat, the belting of Alma Cogan and the crooning of Frank Sinatra. In my hometown Mangatarem (Pangasinan), he was the first to own the classic stereo, Fisher. In the olden

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza



days, when Kanor felt like he wanted a gulp of Beer-Gin-Coke (not knowing what it really was in those halcyon days, I called it Virgin Coke), he'd first play Paul Anka's album and sing a Paul Anka line, such as "When somebody leaves you, that's the time ... to drink." Kanor and I will relive those happy times one of these days in the company of Kuya Dante Fernandez, Boying Estrada, Tom Garcia from Cagayan de Oro, Nanding Lopez, Caloy Rufo, Kuya Junior Garcia and newly arrived from Virginia (USA) Boni Sison, among others.

My, my, will it be a night of boozin' and singin' Kanor?

THE PASAY Cockpit

Cockers Association (PCCA) presents its inaugural derby for 2003, a 4-cock event on Friday, Jan. 17 at Pasay City Cockpit. Sponsors are Sagupaan Super Feeds and Complexor 3000.

At stake is P300,000 while entry fee is P10,000, according to Eric dela Rosa who is heading the group.

Submission of weights is on Thursday, Jan. 16 from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. after which matching of entries follows. For inquiries, please contact 843-1890 and 843-1746.

"This derby is exclusive to PCCA members only. To our regular walk-in participants, they may join the upcoming 4-cock derby on Jan. 24 (Cito Manansala) or the 5-cock derby (Jun Marasigan) on Jan. 31," dela Rosa explained.

NBA RESULTS

Toronto 105, Minnesota 91; Dallas 96, LA Clippers 90; Orlando 107, Philadelphia 105; San Antonio 81, Boston 80; Phoenix 107, Utah 99; Sacramento 106, Memphis 98; Cleveland 87, Seattle 79; LA Lakers 106, Miami 81.

AFP

OLYMPICS OR SEA GAMES?

RP jins encounter schedule problems

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PHILIPPINE taekwondo officials are in a dilemma: Will they bring their best jins in the Vietnam Southeast Asian Games or the World Olympic qualifying in Paris, France.

Both tournaments fall on the same week in December and Philippine Taekwondo Association executive vice president Sung Chon Hong fears that the country's top four jins seeing action in France might not be able to fly in time to compete in Vietnam.

Hong said the World qualifying will be held Dec. 2-5, while the Vietnam SEAG will be from Dec. 5-15.

"It's not yet clear when the taekwondo events will be held, but there might be problems if the dates are too close," said Hong. "But whatever happens, we will give priority of course to the Olympics."

Considering that taekwondo is one of the sports counted upon to deliver the country's first Olympic gold medal, Hong said the Philippines will give the Athens Games its best shot.

"But it doesn't mean that we won't send good taekwondo jins in the SEA Games, we will field players in Vietnam who are also very capable of winning gold medals," Hong said.

After all, the Philippines is considered a powerhouse in the region, having won three gold medals through Roberto Cruz, Manel Sy and Veronica Domingo, aside from garnering five silvers and five bronzes during the Kuala Lumpur SEAG two years ago.

Hong said the Philippines hopes to send four of the best jins in the 2004 Athens Olympics though he added that the roster will still be determined through rigid qualifying within the year here and abroad.

During the 2000 Sydney Games, the Philippines managed to send four jins— the maximum number of bets for each country—but didn't survive the tough opposition in the Olympics.

"We have a better chance this time because of what happened in Sydney," he said. "I think we have learned our lessons very well."

If the Philippines fails to make it four-of-four in France, Hong said the country will try once more in the Asian qualifying on Jan. 2004 possibly in Japan.

Els rips PGA mark, tops Mercedes by 8



ELS hugs his daughter Samantha after winning the Mercedes Championships in Kapalua, Hawaii.

By Alex Miceli

KAPALUA, Hawaii—South Africa's Ernie Els shattered the PGA Tour scoring record and in the process won his first Mercedes Championship on Sunday with an amazing 31-under-par 261 total.

Eight shots back and tied for second place were Rocco Mediate, who fired a final-round 10-under 63, and South Korean K.J. Choi, who could only manage an even-par 73 when most players were scoring low.

Fiji's Vijay Singh and South Africa's Retief Goosen finished nine strokes behind Els in the winner's only event in a tie for fourth place.

In winning his 11th PGA Tour title, Els was never really pressed.

He began the day two shots ahead of Choi, and after coasting through the front nine with a one-under 35, had actually extended his lead by another shot.

"I think we both got caught up in the match play situation there," Els said of both his and Choi's lackluster performances on the first nine holes.

"We just need to step it up, start playing our game and really go after the golf course again," Els said he told his caddie as they left the ninth green.

Choi made his only move on Els with back-to-back birdies on the 10th and 11th holes to move within one shot.

Then Els birdied the 12th to extend his lead and gained another shot at the 13th with a par to Choi's bogey.

When Els birdied the 14th and Choi made another bogey, the margin was five strokes and the tournament all but won. Reuters

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La Salle netters beat Ateneo

DE La Salle defeated Ateneo, 2-1, yesterday for its second straight win in the second round of the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) men's tennis tournament at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Pasig City.

Yannick Guba outplayed Neil Co, 6-4, 6-2, while Andre Cruz and Nico Faller survived Gee Abacan and Mart Temblique, 6-2, 3-6, 6-3, as the Green Netters of Roland Kraut fortified their title bid this year.

Defending champion University of Santo Tomas notched its first win at the expense of University of the Philippines, 2-1.

Pius Ocampo scored a 6-3, 6-3, victory over Jim Rellona while Art Tomas Calingsan and Maclean Barraquias assured the win with a 6-7, 6-0, 6-4 victory over Jericho Sison and

James Soldivillo in the doubles. UP Maroon Alex Borela took the second singles over Art Philip Calingsan, 6-2, 1-6, 6-4.

In the women's division, reigning titlist UST demolished Ateneo, 3-0, to remain unbeaten after two games.

Charise Godoy, who played for the RP Federation Cup team last year, outclassed Maddy Chan, 6-1, 6-0, Ziara Battad and Kay Lacanilao clobbered Gem Co and Lady Tamiantong, 6-1, 6-2, and Ofelia Arribe whipped Tisha de Leon, 6-1, 6-2.

The Lady Green Netters picked their first win courtesy of UP, 2-1.

Berry Sepulveda trounced Roma Agsalud, 6-1, 6-1, while Krissy Alina and Sommer Bisagas struggled past Kim Espiritu and Kat Esquerro, 6-4, 5-7, 6-2. UP's Julie Ann Dizon won over Liza Buenabrazo, 6-0, 6-3.

'The President did not fire me'

THE FOLLOWING is a statement (unedited) sent to the INQUIRER by Cynthia L. Carrion, saying she was not fired by President Macapagal as PSC commissioner.

"I wish to categorically state that the President, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, did not fire me, nor kicked me out of the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC).

"Right before the President wanted to appoint me as Commissioner in PSC sometime April of 2001, I had wished to decline and in fact, personally asked the President to serve instead for tourism because I knew very well the politics in sports, and as a very private and peaceful person as I am, I had feared the intricacies of politics.

"When misunderstandings and internal problems in PSC and within us in the Board cropped up sometime early 2002, I immediately asked (again) the President for my transfer to DOT, and persistently waited for her grant of my request.

"Since I came to PSC, I have never thrown my weight around, nor gotten into anomalous transactions, nor committed malversation of funds as alleged. My only fault and I

admit it is my hiring of my former executive assistant which got the ire of my colleagues in the Board. I wanted peace, and I have been careful and honest in my service in PSC. Because of my desire for peace, I have been firm in my appeal to the President that I better and I am more fit to serve for and in tourism.

"My wish for sports and our sports leaders is to continue the legacy I have started. These are the institution of the women and sports program in the Philippines with the formation and help of the national working group of women and sports in all the 16 regions of the country, and of the sports programs for under-privileged children and migrant youth.

"Thank you."

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY In 1990, Mario Castro clocked 40 minutes and 1 second to rule the 2nd National Cross Country championship at the Surigao Sports Complex in Surigao City. Also today In 1990, FEU beat TIP, 91-89, to top the Metro Manila eliminations for the national intercollegiate basketball championship at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

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Miñoza is First Gentleman golf surprise entry in Davao

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WITH the eminent Frankie Miñoza set to see action, the First Gentleman's Circuit leg in Davao's Rancho Palos Verdes starting today promises to be a thriller.

Miñoza, the only Filipino to gain success from the money-rich Japan Tour in recent memory, is joining the series for the first time.

The First Gentleman Foundation and San Miguel Beer have put up P600,000 for the four-day event that will see the participation of many of the country's top pros.

Miñoza, winless since his victory in the Fujisankei Classic in May 2001, heads the biggest starting roster in the South, the bulk of which was scheduled to arrive late yesterday afternoon in Davao after availing of WG&A Super Ferry's free transport.

And Miñoza may well be the man Benjie Magada, the hottest player on tour, is waiting for.

Magada had picked up victories in Iloilo and in Cebu where he set the biggest winning margin so far of eight strokes.

Other impressive finishes have made Magada the surprise leader of the Order of Merit after six legs.

Davao's hotshots are expected to crowd Magada and Miñoza for the P100,000 champion's money.

But for players like Sta. Elena leg winner Antonio Lascuña and Cassius Casas, who went back to the doldrums after winning at Sherwood Hills, to avert an expected Miñoza romp, they will have to play as consistently as Magada.

Danny Zarate, who had become the most successful among the under-achieving overseas campaigners, is also out to corner his first leg victory before embarking on his Asian Tour campaign where he finished 41st in the rankings last season.

Miñoza's decision to join the Mindanao Tour drew praises from organizers.

"At a time when the pro Tour is trying to encourage more sponsorships, the support of Miñoza is something we really need. With him around, the competition will become even more exciting," said Arroyo.

Comelec chair Ben Abalos, who is also the commissioner of the pro golf body, said Miñoza is doing an "unselfish act," a proof that he is indeed a favorite son of Mindanao.

"When he could have just stayed in Bukidnon to enjoy his vacation, Frankie has provided the First Gentleman's Circuit with his exhilarating presence that will definitely elevate the level of play," said Abalos.

Mars Pucay as well as Angelo Que, the rookie who scored a breakthrough win in Bacolod, and Marlon Dizon will not be around since they are currently in Malaysia joining the final stage of the Asian Tour Qualifying School.

Chances are Miñoza, who placed 23rd in the 2002 Philippine Open which was the only local event he had played, will join the entire Mindanao swing since the next two stops are to be held in his home province, the Pueblo del Oro and Del Monte stages in Cagayan de Oro. **ASM**



MIÑOZA

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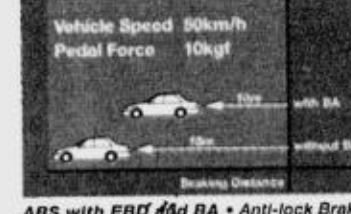
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ATENEO GRAD SLAY

Gunman traced to Muslim community in Cavite

By Philip Tubeza
and Christian Esguerra

THE MOTORCYCLE which the killer of Ateneo Law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas used has been traced to a man living in a Muslim community in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

A check with the Land Transportation Office showed that the Kawasaki, with

license plate VM-2047, is registered to a Cola M. Ditato, a resident of Block 21, Lot 3, Barangay Datu Esmal in Dasmariñas, according to Senior Supt. Oscar Catalan, Pasay City police chief.

"He is our main suspect right now," said Catalan. "Our priority is to get him as soon as possible."

The INQUIRER went to Ditato's house yesterday and found out that it was oc-

cupied by another family. The house is located just across a police community precinct and a mosque.

No one among the residents in the area could recall a man going by that name in their neighborhood. But one resident said his neighbors could probably be protecting Ditato, because they knew that his motorcycle had been used by an unidentified man in killing the 26-year-old Llamas in Pasay City

Friday afternoon.

Catalan, who had dispatched a team of policemen to locate Ditato, said the motorcycle's registered owner could even be the same person who had gunned down the Law graduate because of a petty traffic feud.

The police team failed to collar Ditato. Barangay councilman Bombola Panondi, 33, said Ditato had probably owned the house before another family moved in several months ago.

"The name is familiar but I don't recall seeing him here," Panondi told the INQUIRER.

It was also possible, he said, that Ditato only put down Datu Esmal as his address when he registered his motorcycle at the LTO. The barangay officer said the man could be staying in Maharlika in Taguig or in Quiapo in Manila.

Home to about 40,000 Muslims, Barangay Datu Esmal, with its narrow streets congested by parked vehicles and bystanders, has occasionally served as a meeting place for drug dealers from other communities in Metro Manila, according to Panondi.

"Legitimate residents are really peace-loving," he said. "But our barangay is perceived as crime-infested only because of the criminal activities of Muslim outsiders here."

The family of the slain Ateneo alumnus yesterday asked the National Bureau of Investigation's help in solving the killing.

"We hope the gunman is arrested soon," said Raffy Llamas, elder brother of the slain topnotch Ateneo law graduate. "The longer it takes, the harder it is for our family."

"We hope that there will be closure for our family," Raffy told reporters at the NBI headquarters yesterday morning.

Raffy just arrived from Canada after hearing about his brother's death. Their father is still abroad.

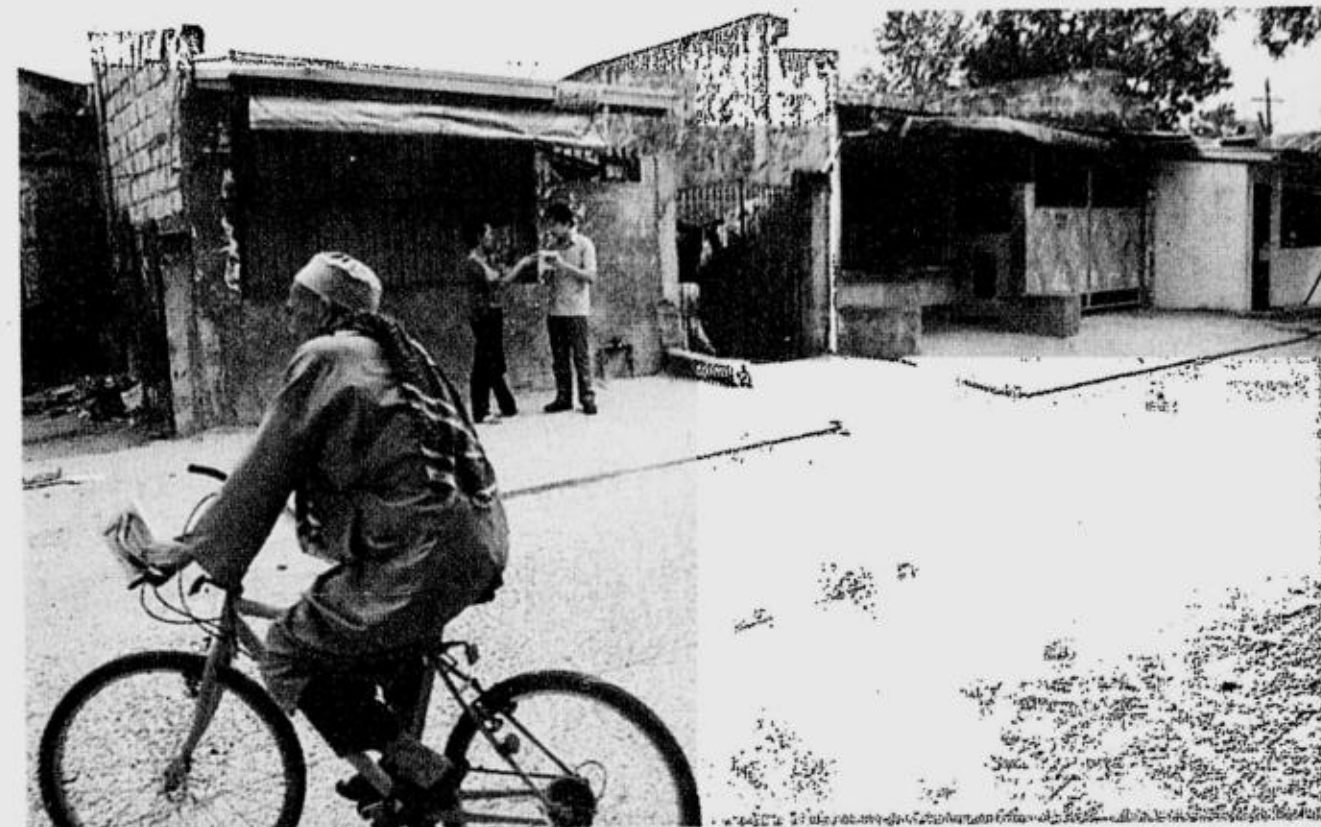
An unidentified man shot dead Jose Ramon at the corner of Taft and Buendia avenues in Pasay on Friday afternoon after an alleged traffic altercation.

Raffy urged other witnesses to come forward and help investigators identify the gunman.

The source said that investigators are also having doubts if the victim was really killed over a petty traffic argument.

The investigator said Jose Ramon looked like he was killed by a professional hitman. "It's hard to believe that this is due to a simple traffic altercation," he said.

But the source said the victim's relatives knew of no one who had a grudge against Jose Ramon.



THE HOUSE on this Dasmariñas, Cavite street could have been home to the killer of Ateneo Law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas.

Urban poor to question BF appointment

By Christian Esguerra

AN URBAN poor group representing about 100,000 informal settlers in Metro Manila is set to question before the court the appointment of Bayani Fernando as Public Works secretary and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair.

Bien Salinas, legal consultant of the Urban Poor Associates (UPA), yesterday said Fernando's holding of dual positions was clearly prohibited by the Constitution.

He noted that the positions of MMDA chair and Public Works secretary are of

the same Cabinet level though involving entirely different functions. He said Fernando should be made to choose between the two positions.

The lawyer said the urban poor group was only waiting for a copy of Fernando's official appointment as secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways before it files a case against him.

The planned legal action against Fernando was an offshoot of his tough policies against squatters and illegal vendors since he became MMDA chair. His enemies fear that he would impose the same "inhumane" measures all over

the country, the moment he assumes the DPWH post.

"No official since Martial Law has been so universally feared and disliked by the poor as Fernando," said Ted Añana, UPA assistant coordinator.

Among the most-feared policies of Fernando are his hard-nosed drive to clear sidewalks of illegal vendors and his resolve to flush out squatters clogging waterways in Metro Manila.

The demolition of shanties in the northern metropolis and in areas surrounding Pasig River and the Laguna Lake would displace about 100,000 informal settlers, UPA claimed.

Metro mayors want own changes in Charter

By Jerome Aning

Metro Manila mayors have reached a consensus to push for changes in the Constitution, particularly those that would strengthen and further empower local government units.

League president and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he and other mayors in the metropolis feel that genuine development could only be attained if LGUs are empowered.

"This can be done by introducing provisions that would further devolve powers as well as resources to LGUs under the principle of local autonomy."

Atienza said they will also push for the restoration of control and supervision of the

police to local authorities.

"One of the key components in achieving development is a stable peace and order condition," Atienza said. "This can only be possible if the police are under the control of, and are accountable to, local officials who are elected by the people."

The mayor pointed out the experience of China, whose LGUs enjoy genuine autonomy and are empowered to formulate and implement their development programs, without having to get approval from the central government in Beijing.

Atienza said infrastructure projects being undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Highways—such as the mainte-

nance of local drainage systems and construction of local roads, barangay halls and other facilities—could be turned over to the LGUs so that the agency could concentrate on national projects such as the development of a subway system or a Pan-Philippine Highway.

The mayor said he and other mayors, want the charter amendments done only through a constitutional convention, composed of elected delegates.

"Nothing else would ensure the integrity of the process," Atienza said. "A con-con would mirror the sentiments of the people and would concentrate on introducing rational amendments."

Killers seen laughing after stabbing cabbie to death

By Philip Tubeza

THE THREE killers of taxi driver Juan F. Carpio, 28, were seen making jokes when they left their victim bleeding to death inside his taxi on Sunday night in Manila.

Carpio, 38, of Santol, Quezon City, was stabbed twice in the chest, said Detective Alfredo Salazar of the Western Police District homicide section. Carpio also had wounds in his arms, face and stomach.

His intestines were protruding, Salazar said.

But witnesses heard nothing when Carpio's killers—three men in their 30s—ganged up on the victim inside his Ralp taxi, a white Toyota Corolla (TWB-152).

What got their attention was the joke the culprits apparently enjoyed when they got off the

taxi, Salazar said.

"The witnesses said the suspects suddenly alighted and were even joking," Salazar said. "The suspects did not even try to make a run for it."

The suspects' light-hearted banter aroused the witnesses' curiosity and they approached the taxi.

Salazar said they were shocked to see Carpio slumped in the driver's seat. He was already lifeless.

Salazar said the victim's money was still intact, but the driver's wallet was missing.

He added that Carpio could have been a victim of a robbery or revenge. Carpio might also have been killed because of a quarrel over taxi fare, he added.

The victim's body was later taken to a police morgue for autopsy, Salazar said.



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Pag-Asa ng Masa! magbabalik na!

Mass transport plan to benefit from Bayani's dual posts

By Leila B. Salaverria
and Christian V. Esguerra

THE PROPOSED mass transport system meant to decongest traffic in Metro Manila is the first project that would benefit from Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando's concurrent appointment as Public Works secretary.

"Since I am holding the two positions, the project would be fast-tracked because there would be less talks and less arguments (among the people involved in the operations)," Fernando said yesterday.

But an urban poor group representing about 100,000 informal settlers in Metro Manila is poised to question before the court Fernando's appointment as DPWH secretary.

Bien Salinas, legal consultant of the Urban Poor Associates yesterday said that Fernando's holding of dual positions was clearly prohibited by the Constitution.

He noted that the positions of

MMDA chair and DPWH secretary are of the same Cabinet level though involving entirely different functions.

Fernando should be made to choose between the two positions, Salinas said, adding that the urban poor group was only waiting for a copy of Fernando's official appointment as secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways before it files a case against him.

But even without this move by the UPA, Fernando would still have his hands full: He would have to remove the informal settlers living near railroad tracks to move ahead with his proposed mass transit system.

"We have to recover the whole right of way of the existing railroad," Fernando said. "We need to remove all those who live there."

About 70,000 informal settlers would have to be relocated to Muntinlupa near the National Bilibid Prison, Fernando said, and about 20,000 would have to be evacuated immediately.

"If we remove them, there will be an urban renewal in Metro Manila," he said. "At the same time, these people will be given a new lease on life and a better environment."

Construction of the terminals will begin at the same time the informal settlers are being transferred, Fernando added.

The North Avenue station, which can hold 600 buses, and costs P50M, will be completed in 4 months, he said. The North Avenue terminal will be three kilometers long and extend all the way to East Avenue.

Fernando said that the planned mass transport terminals all over Metro Manila would be completed in 18 months, or before the end of his term.

The other terminals will be located in Magallanes in the south, Baclaran in the southwest area, Sangandaan in the north-west area and Marikina in the eastern area.

The terminals will have covered walkways, a 24 meter-wide parking space for buses, and will

be connected to MRT, LRT and PNR railways so that bus passengers will have easy access to mass transportation and vice versa. The North Avenue terminal, for example, will be connected to three MRT stations in North Edsa, Quezon Avenue and Kamuning.

Fernando said the terminals could even host commercial areas, catering to the pedestrian traffic there.

Additional railways going to Malolos, Bulacan in the north, Calamba, Laguna in the south, San Jose, Bulacan in the northeast and Bacoor, Cavite in the southwest are also being eyed, he said, and additional MRT and LRT lines will be installed in areas where none exist.

"With the mass transport terminals, the areas outside of the 20 km up to 50 km radius from Metro Manila will now be ideal or suitable for relocation and new settlements," Fernando said. "To make it suitable, we have to have a good and efficient mass transport system."



FEELING LUCKY

Nine-year-old Gabriel Misalucha who lost his home in a fire that razed a squatter community on Ermin Garcia Street in Quezon City last week, counts himself lucky after he found several pieces of coins in the ruins.

JOAN BONDOL

Shootout between cop and barangay men probed

By Alcuin Papa

WHO shot first?

Investigators of the Central Police District Criminal Investigation Unit are trying to determine if a Quezon City policeman first shot at barangay watchers of Batasan Hills, which resulted in a shootout that left SPO3 Venancio Herrera and six other barangay men seriously injured.

The six watchers of Barangay Batasan Hills in Quezon City were identified as Fernando Valermo, 24; Jolly Trabado, 30; Noel Orquilla, 27; Rey Parnas, 40, of 126 Laurel St., Freedom Park 6, Barangay Batasan Hills; and Felixberto Catalan, 39, of Pook Pag-asa, Barangay

Batasan Hills.

Initial reports of the Central Police District showed the shooting occurred at 9:30 p.m. on Sunday at Freedom Park 6, Barangay Batasan Hills.

The reports said that Herrera, 40, of 94 Robel St., Freedom Park 4, who is assigned to the CPD police station 6 in Batasan Hills, went to the Batasan Hills barangay outpost to intercede in the release of his nephew Rodrigo Rapin.

Barangay watchmen nabbed Rapin for carrying a knife, the report said.

After talking to a Kagawad Briones, Herrera supposedly managed to have Rapin released. Herrera said that as he was

walking away from the outpost, the watchmen shot at him with handguns and hit him in the shoulder and right arm.

But the six barangay men claimed that Herrera arrived at the outpost, grabbed Rapin and ordered his nephew to run.

They said they chased Rapin who boarded a jeepney as Herrera shot at them with a handgun, wounding them in different parts of the body. They said they managed to return fire and hit the policeman.

All the injured were brought to the East Avenue Medical Center for treatment as police continue their investigation of the shootout.

Chief Insp. Bart Bustamante, spokesperson for the CPD, told reporters that both parties might

be liable for certain crimes.

"We want to know who really started shooting and we are awaiting the results of the investigation. Everyone involved is under custody," he said.

Bustamante said the CPD also wants to know why the watchmen were carrying firearms.

But he said Herrera might be liable for obstruction of justice.

"If he indeed used his gun, there was no reason for him to do so. The presumption of regularity, if this were the case, seems to be on the side of the watchmen since the suspect was arrested for carrying a weapon."

Bustamante said police would file appropriate charges when the investigation is concluded.

Bomb threat sends school into panic

By Tina Santos

A BOMB threat in a text message sent thousands of students of Malinta Elementary School on A. De Castro Street, Valenzuela City into a panic yesterday morning.

The panic almost became a stampede as frantic parents stormed the school in search of their children, police said.

But members of the Valenzuela Police Special Weapons and Tactics Unit and Explosives Ordnance Division whom school officials called, did not find a bomb in the school, police said.

Initial investigation showed that a handwritten threat, saying that Grade 3 and Grade 4 students would be killed was found by teacher Amalia Biazon on the blackboard of room 52 of the Grade 4 building at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday.

Police said Biazon informed her co-teacher Nilda Baguio and acting school principal Dr. Nella Rodriguez about the threat.

The threat reached a parent of one of the school's pupils through text message, which said that a bomb would explode at the Malinta Elementary School yesterday morning.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Tuesday, January 14, 2003
1st Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:
Gospel:

Heb 2:5-12
Mk 1:21-28

Jesus and his disciples went into the town of Capernaum and began to teach in the synagogue during the sabbath assemblies. The people were astonished at the way he taught, for he spoke as one having authority and not like the teachers of the Law.

It happened that a man with an evil spirit was in their synagogue and he shouted, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: You are the Holy One of God." Then Jesus faced him and said with authority, "Be silent and come out of this man!" The evil spirit shook the man violently and, with a loud shriek, came out of him.

All the people were astonished and they wondered, "What is this? With what authority he preaches! He even orders evil spirits and they obey him!" And Jesus' fame spread throughout all the country of Galilee.

Commentary

Thinkers like George Steiner have argued that we live in a time where the Word is in crisis. Too often, consumerist culture has used words to deceive, advertisements using seductive words that promise more than they can deliver. Politicians have used words to delude and mislead, to make promises that are never fulfilled. We suffer from too many words, too many printed words on the pages of newspapers, magazines, books, that are here today and then thrown on the garbage pile tomorrow. Words have become cheap and unreliable. How different the word of Jesus is! It is a word that holds people spellbound because it comes with authority: the authority of Jesus' own utter integrity; the authority of a word that heals and liberates an enslaved demoniac. Jesus' word makes a difference in the world of suffering it is spoken in. How can our words share in the authority of Jesus' words?

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES



LABOR LAW (TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT)—Work-related illness—Under the Amended Rules on Employees Compensation, "(f) or the sickness and the resulting disability to be compensable, the sickness must be the result of an occupational disease listed under Annex "A" of these Rules with the conditions set therein satisfied; otherwise, proof must be shown that the risk of contracting the disease is increased by the working conditions. Concededly, "end-stage renal disease secondary in uric acid nephropathy" is not among the Occupational Diseases under Annex "A" of the Amended Rules on Employees Compensation. This, however, would not automatically bar petitioner's claim for as long as he could prove that the risk of contracting the illness was increased by his working condition. Considering the workload and areas of responsibility of petitioner in this case, it is not unlikely for him to develop hypertension, which in turn led to uremia. It should be stressed that in determining whether a disease is compensable, it is enough that there exists a reasonable work connection. It is sufficient that the hypothesis on which the workmen's claim is probable since probability, not certainty, is the touchstone. The findings of the petitioner's attending physician supported the claim that his disease was work-related. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Kapunan, First Division, Limbo v. Employees Compensation Commission, G. R. No. 146891, July 30, 2002]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

5 cops cited for bravery, 1 recommended dismissed

NATIONAL Capital Region Police Office Chief Deputy Director General Reynaldo V. Velasco yesterday cited five members of the Central Police District Office for their successful neutralization of a suspect in a shooting incident in Quezon City.

Velasco also recommended the summary dismissal of a rogue cop who had a drinking binge then a shooting spree in Las Piñas City.

PO2 Alejo Omilla, of CPDO Station 6 mobile patrol QC-20,

was cited for his bravery, and his colleagues PO2 Arturo Guillermo Lara, PO1 Balbino Roas and PO1 Melvin Merida were commended for a job well done.

The NCRPO chief said these police officers embodied the new breed of cops in the Metro Manila Police Force, who are tough on criminals but are gentle to the citizenry.

Velasco bestowed the Medalya ng Sugatang Magiting to PO2 Ormilla and gave financial assistance for his treat-

ment at the East Avenue Medical Center.

But Velasco recommended the relief of Makati City cop PO2 Domingo Lim, 46, assigned in Precinct 6, for terrorizing his neighbors in Las Piñas City.

Lim was arrested by members of the local Special Weapons and Tactics team.

"The NCRPO will not tolerate shameful behavior among men in our ranks," Velasco said. "We are striving to regain

the trust and confidence of the people to the police and we will not let one abusive cop spoil what we have worked hard for."

Las Piñas City Police Chief Senior Supt. Armando Pineda said that the drunken Lim was arrested after his neighbors complained that the cop had indiscriminately fired his gun and challenged them to a fight near his house at North Lane Greymarville Subdivision, Las Piñas City last Jan. 9.

A heartless Cabinet member

SECRETARY Marita Jimenez of Malacañang's Overseas Development Assistance should have shown concern for an Adamson University student Angelyn Francisco, 21, who was bumped by her car driven by her driver last Dec. 18.

Although Jimenez denies that she was in the lead car of a two-vehicle convoy, Eddie Alarado who drove the back-up vehicle, said she was in the first car.

Even if that was the case, the Cabinet member should have visited Angelyn at the hospital.

But the worse thing Jimenez did was to have the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) pay for Angelyn's hospital expenses.

She should be reminded that medical and hospital expenses undertaken by the PCSO are only for indigent patients.

Since it was her driver who ran over Angelyn, Jimenez should have paid for all the hospital expenses with her own money.

Going back to the accident, Jimenez shouldn't give me the excuse she gave in my "Isumbong mo kay Tulfo" program at dwlZ last Friday that she was not in the lead car.

If she wasn't there, how come the convoy was in such a hurry it beat the red light? That's when the lead car of the convoy bumped Angelyn who was crossing the intersection of Ayala Boulevard and San Marcelino Street.

If you were not in the lead car, Ma'am, how come it sped off toward Malacañang and left the back-up car to take the victim to

the hospital?

Why is it Madame Secretary, that the people in the back-up vehicle driven by Alarado, told the victim they were "concerned citizens" and were only helping her?

You know how we at "Isumbong" came to know that the people who took Angelyn to the hospital were members of your back-up car? The traffic enforcers at the scene told us.

And before I interviewed you over dwlZ last Friday, I was able to talk to Alarado, your back-up driver. He told me that you were in your lead car.

Bago ka sana nagsinungaling, dapat nakipag-coordinate ka muna sa back-up driver mo (You should have coordinated with your back-up driver before you lied!)

If you can lie about a small thing like an accident in which you were involved, you could also lie about big things.

And those big things might involve millions of pesos in government money.

You committed graft, Madame Secretary, when you had the PCSO pay for the girl's hospital expenses when it should have been you who should have shouldered the expenses.

If some policemen don't show sympathy for crime victims, the Philippine National Police (PNP) can't win the trust of the citizenry no matter how many police mascots they parade around during

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



the Christmas season.

Vivian Ocbina, 34, of Muntinlupa went to the town's police station to file a complaint against an unidentified man who broke her husband's arm during a traffic incident last Nov. 3.

The husband, Marcelino, was taken to a hospital and could not go to the police station to file the complaint himself. His fracture was so serious doctors didn't allow him to leave the hospital for a month.

Insp. Marites Salvador, who was chief investigator at the station at the time, took Vivian's complaint.

But when Vivian asked the police lieutenant if she could send an investigator to the hospital to interview her husband, she was rebuffed.

"It's not our duty to investigate crime victims in the hospital," Salvador told Vivian. "Why don't you have your husband come to the station to file the complaint himself?"

For a graduate of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA), Salvador is stupid.

How could she expect the victim to come to the station to file the complaint when he was being treated at the hospital?

What kind of graduates do

they turn up at the PNPA, the police counterpart of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA)?

Vivian said the police lieutenant was reading a newspaper when she approached her desk at the station.

Upset at being disturbed, Salvador supposedly scolded her.

If Salvador didn't want other people to disturb her she shouldn't have joined the police. She should just have become a plain housewife. That way, she could and read all the newspapers and gossip all day long while waiting for her husband to come home.

What do they teach cadets at the PNPA, the premier police academy where Salvador graduated?

It's time they taught good manners and sympathy towards crime victims at the PNPA.

It's high time they imposed rigid discipline at the PNPA so that it will produce graduates who are not abusive and arrogant.

A couple of years ago, new graduates of the PNPA decided to end their celebration for the night by going to a hole-in-the-wall bar beside the railroad tracks in Manila.

They were already drunk at the time they entered the place.

They got more drunk after a couple of drinks at the bar. The new police lieutenants created trouble in the bar and beat up its owner, an old woman.

Then PNP chief Roberto Lastimosa dismissed all of them outright after learning about their abusive conduct.

Bong claims headway in fight against CD piracy

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE PRONOUNCEMENT of a United States trade official that the Philippines was doing nothing about its video piracy problem was out of bounds, according to Videogram Regulatory Board chief Ramon "Bong" Revilla.

Revilla yesterday said in a statement that US Commerce Assistant Secretary William Lash III was unfair and given to making hasty generalizations.

"While it cannot be denied that the trade of pirated videos still continues, the Philippine government has gone a long way from the old days," Revilla said. "Therefore, it cannot be categorically stated that we are doing nothing."

Lash, US trade official for market access and compliance, toured the Virra Mall in San Juan last Friday, saying he wanted to show how easy it is to find pirated products in the country.

Lash said that "without having to ask anybody," he was able to obtain pirated DVD copies of Hollywood movies like "Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets," "Blood Work," and "The Lord of the Rings: Two Towers."

Lash said the Philippines would likely re-

main on the priority US watch list of countries where there are rampant violations of intellectual property rights.

He said the loss of revenues of US companies due to these violations in the Philippines amounted to about \$116 million last year, while the Philippine government lost some \$25 million in taxes.

But Revilla said the VRB has successfully confiscated over six million pieces of pirated videos, worth over P2 billion since he assumed office in July 2002.

He said that the Board has shut down four illegal piracy operations where seven replicating machines were confiscated. He added that four replicating machines were also seized upon their entry into the country.

"It is therefore insulting to receive such a flak that appears to be based on hasty generalizations," Revilla said in the statement.

"It would have been better for Assistant Secretary (Lash) to have first looked in the situation a year ago, and compared it to the situation now."

Revilla said that he does not claim to have completely solved the problem, adding that "a 50-per-

cent to 60-percent reduction in the volume of pirated videos in the market is an accomplishment."

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the International Federation of Pornographic Industries (IFPI) yesterday released statements commending Revilla's successful campaign against piracy.

"The (MPA) has noticed a marked improvement in the efforts of the (VRB) to combat the rampant piracy situation in the Philippines since" the appointment of Revilla as its chair, Mike Ellis, MPA vice president and regional director of anti-piracy operations in the Asia Pacific, said in the statement.

"The tangible impact of the numerous raids being carried out by the VRB is already beginning to be seen with millions of seized discs being taken off the streets as a direct result of his (Revilla's) aggressive enforcement," the IFPI statement said.

The federation, which entered into a memorandum of agreement with the VRB in 2002, has been involved in several VRB-led raids against illegal optical disc replication facilities, large-scale CD burning operations and pirated video distributors and retail outlets.



BONG Revilla appears to have nothing but contempt for the two men accused of peddling counterfeit video CDs of Manila Filmfest entries like *Mano Po*, *Agimat*, *Lapu Lapu* and *Dekada '70*.

RANDY HORMILLOSA

Las Piñas cop chief, 5 others rapped for coddling lawman

By Leila Salaverria

LAWSUITS are flying fast as a result of the incident that almost led to a shootout during an entrapment operation in Las Piñas on Friday.

Criminal charges are being readied against Las Piñas police chief Senior Supt. Armando Pineda, one of his officers and five unnamed policemen, for refusing to yield another officer accused of extortion during an entrapment operation.

Also, two other Las Piñas cops, and two unidentified non-commissioned officers would be charged with robbery and extortion by members of the Interior and Local Government's Task Force Jericho.

The two lawmen were identified during the entrapment operation at the Las Piñas police headquarters on Friday.

For his part, Pineda said he and his men are set to file criminal and administrative charges of grave threats and of violation of the standard operating procedures on internal security against Task Force Jericho members.

According to task force member Insp.

Joselito Savares, who headed the entrapment operation, criminal charges will be filed this week at the Office of the Ombudsman against Pineda and Senior Insp. Sergio Garrobo and 5 unidentified lawmen. Robbery extortion charges will be filed against PO3 Alexander Rafer, Senior Insp. Sergio Garrobo and two unidentified non-commissioned officers.

Complainant Jose Robert Toque tagged Rafer as the one who received the marked money, while Garrobo was tagged as the one who demanded the money from Toque in exchange for the release of Toque's video game machines.

Savares said that when Toque identified Rafer during the entrapment operation at police headquarters, members of the entrapment team seized the suspect, but Rafer's colleagues bolted the door of the headquarters and refused to let the task force members out.

Officers of the Las Piñas police and the DILG then drew their guns, preparing to shoot it out. But cooler heads stepped in and defused the tense situation.

Informed of the incident, Pineda went to the

headquarters. Savares said Pineda at first allowed Rafer to go with the Jericho team for ultraviolet testing, but Pineda allegedly changed his mind when Rafer invoked his constitutional right not to be tested. Rafer then allegedly agreed to be suspended for 15 days.

Savares added some officers of the Las Piñas police even allowed Rafer to wash his hands inside Pineda's bathroom.

But according to Pineda, the task force members did not coordinate the operation with him.

"They barged in like NPA members inside our headquarters," Pineda said in a phone interview yesterday. "What they did was very barbaric in nature."

He also denied that he refused to hand over Rafer, saying he allowed Rafer to go with the team for ultraviolet test, but that it was Rafer's decision not to go with the task force members.

Pineda said Rafer has been suspended for 15 days and his service firearms seized. The police chief said Garrobo was not penalized because no proof of his alleged attempts at extortion were produced.

Crime rate down in Mandaluyong, Abalos claims

By Nelson Flores

MANDALUYONG City Mayor Benjamin Abalos Jr. yesterday said there was a substantial decrease in criminal activities in the city last year as compared to 2001.

Abalos said the decrease in crime rate is due to the continuing effort of the city government to create jobs by attracting more foreign investors. He said the peace and order situation of a particular area is among the major considerations foreign investors take into ac-

count before they decide to invest.

Last year, there were 30 criminal incidents every month per 100,000 city residents. This figure is lower by 12 percent compared to figures recorded in 2001, Abalos explained.

According to the result of the latest census, Mandaluyong has a population of 304,000. This number goes up close to a million during peak hours, from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m., when residents of neighboring towns and cities go to Mandaluyong either to work or shop.

Abalos said he has adopted a strategy to

make the city a haven for foreign investors to sustain its "newest tiger city" status, according to the Asian Institute of Management and Department of Trade and Industry.

Records showed that Mandaluyong was transformed into an economic giant from a backwater town in just 15 years. Its income leaped from P41 million in 1986 to P1.2 billion in 2001.

Abalos also ordered the local police force to intensify its campaign against the sale and use of drugs in the city.

Barbers-Kua impasse, upsetting PTA workers

By Jerome Aning

PHILIPPINE Tourism Authority employees yesterday marched to the Court of Appeals and to the Don Chino Roces Bridge to demand the resolution of the leadership dispute in the agency.

The PTA employees, accompanied by "Running Priest" Fr. Robert Reyes and members of the Confederation of Independent Unions, called on Malacañang to uphold the PTA charter.

They were referring to a provision in the charter which stated that the general manager should serve for six years unless removed for just cause.

Last December, President Macapagal-Arroyo sacked then General Manager Nixon Kua, saying his term had already expired.

But Kua said that his term will expire in 2006. He refused to yield to Malacañang appointee Robert Dean Barbers, and filed a lawsuit at the CA.

The Association of Dedicated Employees of PTA (Adept) said it is in the public's interest that Kua's case be resolved immediately.

Both Kua and Barbers are currently holding office at the PTA. Both have been issuing separate and oftentimes, conflicting instructions and memoranda.

"Unnecessary confusion, anxiety and divisiveness among officials and rank and file employees of the PTA now pervade," Adept officials said in a resolution.

The employees' group said the processing and implementation of PTA projects have also been affected.

It reported that even owners of banks holding the agency's funds have raised valid questions and concerns as to who should sign the PTA checks.

Unpaid accounts have also piled up and the implementation and completion of important projects have been delayed, Adept said.

In an interview, Kua admitted that PTA operations have been severely affected, but that, he said, is Malacañang's doing.

He urged the President to be true to her promise to stop politicking and not make government offices as rewards for political allegiance.



DRESSING DOWN

The men on the right get a dressing down from Supt. Elmer Jamias, Moriones Police Station commander. The men were rounded up for going out into the streets without shirts, violating a city ordinance.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Expect more heads to roll, Lina says

By Leila Salaverria

National Police Commission Chair Joey Lina yesterday said more erring police officers would be penalized following the formal launch of the 24-hour action center at the Napolcom office yesterday.

"We expect more heads to roll in the coming months," he said, as he encouraged citizens to report incidents of abuse involving cops.

Lina told reporters that since January this year, 16 police officers have been penalized, out of 21 cases brought to the Napolcom.

Nine officers from the Philippine National Police and two from the Napolcom have been dismissed. Three officers from the PNP were suspended for a year, and two from the Napolcom were suspended for three months.

Last year, a total of 57 officers were dismissed, while 21 others were suspended.

Of the four police districts, the Western Police

District had the most number of abusive cops reported, followed by the Southern Police, the Eastern Police, Camp Crame, and Central Police.

Lina said while the Napolcom Action Center is only one of six entities that could penalize erring police officers, it is "less prone to pressure" and more "detached."

The others who could punish police officers are the mayors, the Police regional director, the PNP chief, the Peoples Law Enforcement Board, and the Internal Affairs Service.

The NAC would be open 24 hours to receive all kinds of complaints against ABKD or Abusado, Bastos, Kotongero at Di kanais-nais (Abusive, Rude, Extortionist and Undesirable) police officers, said Lina.

The NAC has four hotline numbers: 890-2535, 899-2088 and 890-2143 and 899-3251. It also has a visitor's lounge and provides free coffee.

METROBRIEFS

Shot in Marikina

CARPENTER Virgilio Casilao has been accused of killing Dr. Benicio Francisco, 72, in Marikina City last weekend. Casilao, 25, of Barangay Cogeo in Antipolo City, has been charged with robbery and homicide before the Marikina City prosecutor's office after he allegedly admitted that he killed Francisco last Saturday, police said. Investigators said Casilao, who works as a handyman for the Francisco family, went to the doctor's house in Barangay Parang to borrow money. When Francisco refused to lend him money, Casilao engaged the victim in a heated argument, which led to a brief scuffle. Casilao then took a steel pipe from the bathroom and hit the doctor on the head, according to Senior Insp. Armando Ponce of the Marikina City police. Casilao then pulled out a .38-caliber revolver and shot Francisco in the chest. One of Francisco's boarders heard the shot and called the police. When the lawmen arrived, they found Casilao ransacking Francisco's room.

Nelson Flores

Killed in Happy Land

TRUCK helper Erwin G. Grutas, 28, died in Happy Land. Detective Ernesto Jose of the Western Police District said Grutas had just come out of Happy Land in Tondo, Manila when unidentified men pounced on him at around midnight Sunday. Jose said Grutas, of General Mariano Trias in Cavite, was not able to defend himself from the knifeblows. After the culprits made sure Grutas was dead, they made their escape. Scrap metal buyer Eschar Sereno, 44, saw the victim sprawled on the ground and took him to the Gat Andres Bonifacio Hospital. The victim was declared dead on arrival, Jose said.

Phillip Tubeza

Dead in Tala

A MAN stricken with Hansen's Disease or leprosy, committed suicide in Caloocan City on Saturday, police said. Feliciano Cruz, 55, a vendor and resident of Barrio San Jose, Tala, Caloocan, shot himself with a custom-made pistol around 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, said PO1 Angeles Llono.

Cruz's wife Maritess was preparing dinner in the kitchen when she heard a shot ring out from the living room, police said. When Maritess and other relatives went to the living room to see what had happened, they saw Cruz sprawled on the floor, bleeding, with a .22-caliber *paltik* lying beside him, Llono said. Maritess told investigators that Cruz had once before tried to end his life because of his illness, but the family was able to stop him.

Tina Santos

Conned in Caloocan

A CON man sweet talked Nena Mission into giving him almost P500,000 in valuables and cash Saturday morning in Caloocan City. Mission, 69, an employee of the Caloocan City Hall and a resident of Barangay Marcela, Caloocan, told police that as she was about to go to her office at around 7:30 a.m., a pleasant, fair-skinned man came up to her and asked where he could get a generator which he could use in his farm. She agreed to help the man, whom she described as about 38 years old, Chinese-looking, and stood about 5-foot-3, and even offered to lend him money when the culprit told her he was short of cash. Mission said when they went to a nearby restaurant to talk, a couple overheard their conversation and said they know where to get a good deal for a generator. The smooth-talking man and the husband then went to the dealer, leaving Mission and the culprit's wife behind. When the con men returned, Mission agreed to lend the suspect her money and jewelry, in exchange for a hefty interest. When the suspect finished inspecting the valuables, he slipped the stuff inside a brown envelope and placed it on the table. Later, the suspect excused himself and said he would buy something outside. The suspect did not return and when she inspected the envelope, all she saw were pieces of paper and a P500 bill. Tina Santos



People, Events & Products

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Aries Espinosa, Editor

Finex inducts 2003 officers

THE FINANCIAL Executive Institute of the Philippines (Finex) will induct its 2003 officers and directors in ceremonies to be held at the Ballroom of the Hotel Intercontinental Manila tomorrow, Jan. 15.

Headlined "Sulong Filipino! Magtiwala, Magkaisa!", this year's theme underlines the directions that the 35-year-old organization has set for the year.

"We are focusing on three key areas for this year. One is to encourage and support the rise of the Filipino entrepreneur, particularly within the SME sector in the countryside. Two: to promote the practice of good governance in both public and

private sectors. Three: for Finex to form partnerships with local government units in order to help them create business-friendly investment climates in their specific areas," says incoming Finex president Edgardo L. Limon.

Finex is composed of finance professionals who are committed to the promotion of efficiency in business enterprises as well as in the development and improvement of financial management techniques. Founded in 1968, Finex counts over 700 members from the country's top corporations, in addition to links with affiliates in the country's key cities.

Over the years, Finex has

been actively supporting the government as well as the private sector by conducting seminars and training programs, involvement in legislative proceedings that affect businesses and sponsoring a number of civic activities.

Among the notable achievements of Finex include the organization of the Credit Information Bureau, the Capital Markets Development Center Inc. and the Philippine Central Depository.

Inducting the new set of officers and directors, as well as the Finex Foundation officers and board of trustees is Ayala Corp. president Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II.



EAST ORTIGAS MANSIONS OPEN HOUSE

DMCI Homes, a subsidiary of construction giant DM Consunji Inc., puts together the luxury and comforts of a resort and a recreation center into its new venture the East Ortigas Mansions. Located along Ortigas Avenue Extension in Pasig, the East Ortigas Mansions was recently inaugurated to provide prospective buyers the chance to view and enjoy the use of its facilities such as the swimming pool, dining area, videoke and game



room. Shown at the inauguration of the East Ortigas Mansions were (inset, from left) Tet Abad Santos, GM of DMCI Homes, Rina Soriano, architect and designer of East Ortigas Mansions, Alfredo Austria, VP-business development of DMCI Homes, and Isidro Consunji, president of DMCI Homes. Those who would like to avail themselves of units at East Ortigas Mansions can inquire at 656-1882/1706.



MOTOROLA BRINGS SMILES TO CHILDREN

Motorola's personal communications sector recently visited the children of the Philippine General Hospital to share the good tidings of Christmas. Shown is Ellen T. Suarez, Motorola's marketing manager for consumer solutions group-south Asia together with the children of PGH's Ward 11 who happily received toys and food. This activity serves as Motorola's way of sharing the blessings it had received in 2002. This was made possible in partnership with Give A Life Foundation, which gives aid to the pediatric section of PGH.

Marie-France's biggest New Year slimming offer

HOW MANY times have you listed "slim down" as one of your new year's resolutions? Have you ever asked yourself why you still can't seem to commit yourself to fulfilling this goal year after year? For most women, losing weight is not as easy as it seems. It's like you have to sacrifice something in order to be slim—starve yourself, push your body to the limit via strenuous workouts, or take extreme measures such as diet pills and fat-reducing surgery, which can put your health at risk.

Slimming need not be that way all—especially if it's at Marie-France Bodyline International. The country's leading non-invasive, non-strenuous slimming center offers you its biggest slimming offer for the new year to help you achieve your weight-loss goals. Avail

yourself of its Buy 1, Take 1 promo for Fat Mobilization System (FMS) and Physique Inch-Loss Treatment from Jan. 8 to 14 only. Melt away excess fat effectively through the scientifically proven FMS body wrap. The Physique treatment will reduce extra inches of flab in your figure by firming it up. With these two treatments, you'll be able to have sexier curves and a slimmer body that you can flaunt for the new year.

Don't miss this special once-a-year promo to achieve the body of your dreams. Call Marie-France at 816-1262 (Makati), 687-1216 (Ortigas), 372-6635 (Timog), 242-2199 (Binondo), 809-9619 (Alabang), 534-5898 (Shaw), 920-8021 (Congressional), 961-2981 (Pampanga), and 233-7637 (Cebu).

Alpha Phi Beta alumni elect new officers

THE ALPHA Phi Beta Fraternity Alumni Association Inc. recently elected a new set of officers and directors for 2003 and 2004.

Elected to the post of lord chancellor is Rene Valdecantos. The other officers are Raul Villanueva, vice chancellor for internal affairs, Butch Aguir, vice chancellor for finance, Raul Pagtalunan, vice chancellor for external affairs, Bee Magtanong, secretary general, Mar Reyes, auditor general, Percy Rosales and Vic Trinidad, secretary generals.

Valdecantos is managing partner of the Romero Valdecantos Arreza and Magtanong Law Offices. He was also the first chief privatization officer of the Privatization and Management Office, an agency attached to the Department of Finance, which succeeded the Asset Privatization Trust. Valdecantos obtained his Bach-

elor of Laws Degree in 1968 from the University of the Philippines. A practicing lawyer, he is a member of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, New York State Bar Association and American Bar Association. He is active in the Rotary and has served for several years as ex-officio director and corporate secretary of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The directors are Butch Aguir, Pete de la Cruz, Mon Esguerra, Edcel Lagman, Dante Liban, Roan Libarios, Bee Magtanong, Raul Pagtalunan, Mar Reyes, Manny Sanchez, Joe Mari Tugan, Louie Urazza Jr., Rene Valdecantos, Raul Villanueva and Dodie Zabella. The sectoral representative members of the board include Troy Mendoza, Fil Guba, Sim Buyco, Hesse Mallilin, Jorge Sarmiento, Kit Villaruz, Manny Yngson Jr. and Ruben Acebedo.



PIOLO AT 1ST MAX'S MANAGERS' CONFAB

Hunk and official Max's celebrity endorser Piolo Pascual gamely poses with Max's branch managers during the 1st Max Restaurant Managers' Conference at Shangri-La Makati held recently. Shown from right are Bebette Javier, managing director at Max's San Mateo, Johna Robles, branch manager, Max's Balanga, Corina Bautista, branch manager of Max's Malolos, Kelly Manalese, VP operations, Max's Laus Group, and Jessica Abejo, franchise operations consultant.

WORLD BEAUTY IN SMC CALENDAR

Michelle Reyes, who was chosen Miss Tourism World 2002 in Ankara, Turkey Dec. 20, is among the beautiful faces in the San Miguel Corp. (SMC) 2003 corporate calendar. Reyes also won a special prize as model of the Universe-Asia. The Filipino beauty—the first Asian to win two consecutive world beauty titles—graces the January-February page of the SMC calendar, which features the many fruits of the Philippines. It is expected to be a handy reference for local and foreign tourists in 2003, which has been designated by the World Travel Organization as "Visit the Philippines Year."



Bingo for 4th World meet

THE FILIPINO plays Bingo on Jan. 19 at the World Trade Center to help raise funds for the 4th World Meeting of Families slated on Jan. 22 to 26. Millions of prizes are at stake including the jackpot prize of one million pesos, three brand new cars and other cash giveaways.

Bingo Bonanza Corp., the country's biggest parlor chain, is sponsoring the event, together with the new Pagcor, Gloria Jean's Coffee and City Lite 88.3.

Tickets are priced at P1,000, good for ten regular games. Tickets are available at Metro Manila Bingo Bonanza parlors. For more information, call 637-5250 or 637-5292 local 128 or 108.

Camp John Hay's New Year's eve spectacular

@ the CAP-John Hay Trade and Cultural Center, Baguio City New Year's eve, 2002

Rocking the mountains to greet the New Year is definitely the way to go. Great weather, great location, great food & great entertainment make for a great P-A-R-Tee. Revelers were treated to an ecologically-friendly event where the only fireworks were party horns blaring with silver & white balloons and confetti raining down at midnight. Once again, SMART Telecommunications, Inc. ties up with Camp John Hay in putting up an outstanding event to put Baguio back in the map as the premier tourist and convention destination in Luzon.

The evening started at 8 pm with a spectacular array of delicacies presented by Chef Billy King of Le Souffle. The Grand Buffet was capped by champagne for all at midnight as the night's entertainers, K.O. Jones & NTWine, two of Manila's hottest bands, jointly did the digital countdown to New Year with most of the guests on the dance floor. K.O. Jones' 70's & 80's music together with NTWine's pop & disco selections kept the crowd rocking until 2am in the chilly

weather. It's the start of what will be a yearly tradition for Camp John Hay.

Chef Billy King was so impressed by the turnout, he wants to team up again with Camp John Hay and SMART for an ultra-exclusive party on Holy Week. Looks like a lot of events are coming back to Baguio, capped by the National Advertising Congress in November. Welcome back Baguio!



By the Penguin



Peng Perez: De Tagle with Louie & Ce: Ysmuel



Dindo Ibazeta & family were among the early arrivals



Toti Carino & family get ready to party



CJH's Heiner Maulbecker welcomes Baguio Gov. Raul Mollinas & wife

FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA



SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY

PUGAD BABOY

BY PM. JUNIOR



BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL



ATOMO AND WEBBO

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS



HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Andy Rooney, Julian Bond, Faye Dunaway, LL Cool J
Happy Birthday: Keeping up the momentum and moving along with the times will ensure your advancement this year. The people who least expect you to get ahead will end up praising you for your accomplishments. Stay humble and enjoy the benefits. Your numbers are 13, 28, 31, 35, 42, 48

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll get more than you bargained for if you aren't careful in the way you word things today. Put your pent-up energy into your work.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Improvements can be made that will help you to feel more confident and ready to conquer the world. Changes in your home appear to be favorable.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Your involvement in a community event or an organization you belong to will lead to some interesting conversations. You'll have the opportunity to make a choice. Don't be indecisive or nothing will change.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): You probably have more options than you realize today. Talk to people in a position to help you. Rewards for past performance will be your ticket to a better position.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): View your situation and you will find the perfect solution. Don't let others know your troubles. A positive attitude will result in better relationships.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): The more involved you become in other people's business, the more detrimental it will be for you. Distance yourself from those individuals who are talking fast but moving nowhere.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Your insight will help someone realize their options. The more direct you are about how you view things, the better you will do both in business and in your personal life.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Today is a perfect day to move your money around or to invest in a little property. You will be given some information today that will aid you in making the right choice.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Don't disagree for the sake of disagreeing. You will only waste time and make an enemy that will be harmful to you at a later date. Be hospitable.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Don't be naive or blind to what is going on around you. Protect your reputation and be prepared for unexpected variations in your everyday routine.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): It is time to get out and do things for yourself. Take the initiative to better yourself and your life. Today is a great day to start anew. The results you get will be favorable.

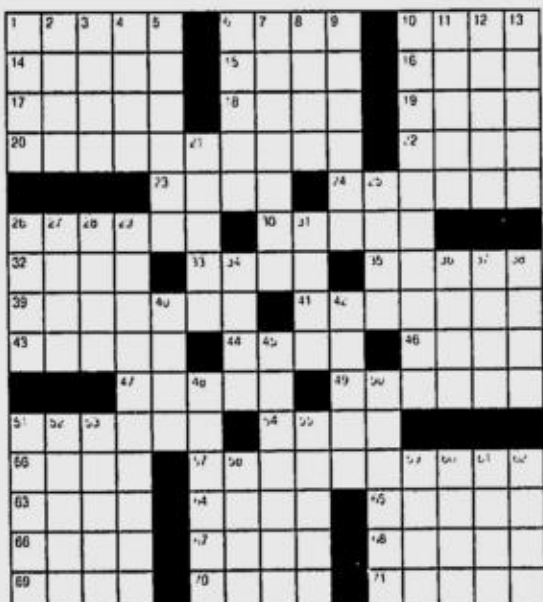
PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Plans for two should be in the works. Make alterations to your living quarters. Your good mood will rub off on whoever you spend time with.

Birthday Baby: You will be inquisitive and will strive to learn all you can about as many things as possible. You will be an exceptional contributor to any group you join.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 "the Greek"
- 6 Metal fastener
- 10 A few laughs
- 14 Quarters
- 15 Westernmost of the Aleutians
- 16 Out of port
- 17 Equals
- 18 Skirt cut
- 19 Authentic
- 20 Farmers
- 22 Sand rise
- 23 People of the Yucatan
- 24 BMOG word
- 26 Candice or Edgar
- 30 Neutral vowel sound
- 32 God of love
- 33 Ballet skirt
- 35 Literary composition
- 39 Trinket
- 41 Lights out
- 43 "A Delicate Balance" playwright
- 44 Greek god of war
- 46 Thompson or Lazarus
- 47 Cranny
- 49 Drowsiness
- 51 British PM MacDonald
- 54 Demeanor
- 56 Alfresco
- 57 Local level
- 63 Mrs. Copperfield
- 64 Manicure's concern
- 65 Excessive
- 66 Redolence
- 67 Sea eagle
- 68 Work period
- 69 Require
- 70 Try out
- 71 Sharpens



By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX

1/14/03

Monday's Puzzle Solved



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1/14/03

DOWN

- 1 Strikes suddenly
- 2 Black-and-white cookie
- 3 Marsh growth
- 4 Fishhook feature
- 5 Take as given
- 6 Precipitous
- 7 By the lowest estimation
- 8 Arouse
- 9 Coup d'etat
- 10 Railroad employee
- 11 Consume completely
- 12 Revoos of "My Own Private Idaho"
- 13 Closeouts
- 21 Domingo
- 25 Filled with reverence
- 26 Rum cake
- 27 Zatopek or Jennings
- 28 Pitcher Nen
- 29 Turf
- 31 Rubik's toy
- 34 Beehive State
- 36 Nimby
- 37 Supply of BB's
- 38 Calendar confines
- 40 Han Solo's sweetheart
- 42 Former senator Kefauver
- 45 Stays behind
- 48 Young swan
- 50 Forward flow
- 51 Heaviest noble gas
- 52 Battery electrode
- 53 Ancient city on the Nile
- 55 Atoll
- 58 Infrequent
- 59 Not taken in by
- 60 Primary Norse god
- 61 Melody
- 62 Sound stages

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON



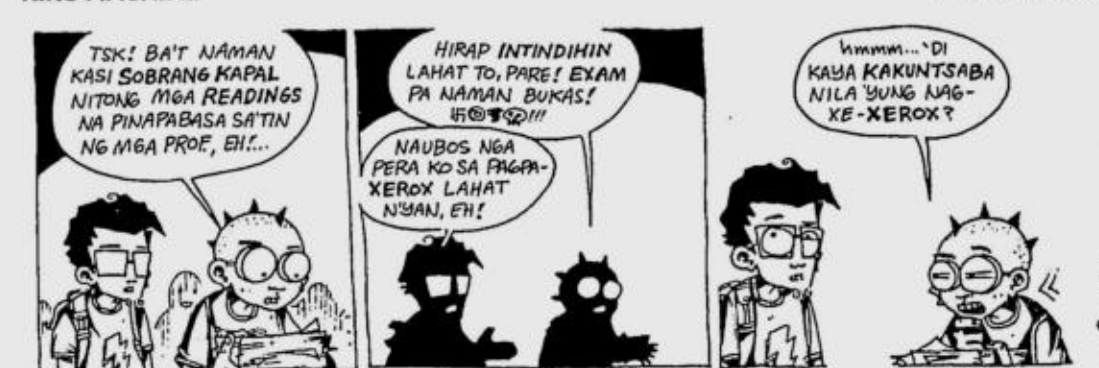
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO



KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO



TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBING



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G1 GLORIETTA 1	G4 GLORIETTA 4	GB1 GREENBELT 1	GB3 GREENBELT 3	ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER
1 MANO PO	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	1 RING (ORIGINAL JAPANESE VERSION) 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS 11:30, 3:00, 6:30, 10:00	1 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
2 HALF PAST DEAD	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	2 THE HOT CHICK (SNEAK PREVIEW) 11:30, 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS 12:10, 3:40, 7:10, 10:40	2 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	3 RING (ORIGINAL JAPANESE VERSION) 1:30, 3:10, 6:50, 10:30	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS 10:45, 2:15, 5:45, 9:15	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS 12:50, 4:20, 7:50, 11:20	3 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	4 THE HOT CHICK (SNEAK PREVIEW)	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS 1:30, 5:00, 8:30, 12:00	4 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS
5 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	5 THE LORD OF THE RINGS: TWO TOWERS	5 HALF PAST DEAD 12:05, 2:20, 4:35, 6:50, 9:05, 11:20	5 HALF PAST DEAD	5 HALF PAST DEAD

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METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

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Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 LORD OF THE RING 3 LORD OF THE RING 4 MANO PO 5 LORD OF THE RING 6 HALF PAST DEAD 7 HOT CHICK (SNEAK PREVIEW) 8 LASTIKMAN 9 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 10 DEKADA '70	GOTESCO CINEMA Gotesco City (Manila) tel 734.8568 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 KERIDA 3 MANO PO 4 HOT CHICK (SNEAK PREVIEW) 5 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 6 HALF PAST DEAD 7 LORD OF THE RING Gotesco Calocan tel 362.3508 RESERVE Gotesco Grand Central (Calocan) tel 365.7928 1 KERIDA 2 LASTIKMAN 3 HOT CHICK (SNEAK PREVIEW) 4 HALF PAST DEAD 5 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 6 LORD OF THE RING 7 LORD OF THE RING 8 MANO PO 9 DEKADA '70 Gotesco Commonwealth tel 951.0082 1 HOT CHICK (SNEAK PREVIEW) 2 LORD OF THE RING 3 LORD OF THE RING 4 HALF PAST DEAD 5 KERIDA Gotesco Ortigas tel 656.6795 1 LASTIKMAN 2 HALF PAST DEAD 3 LORD OF THE RING 4 KERIDA 5 LORD OF THE RING	Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185, 534.2198 1 LASTIKMAN 2 HALF PAST DEAD 3 LORD OF THE RING Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383 1 LASTIKMAN 2 LORD OF THE RING 3 LORD OF THE RING 4 HALF PAST DEAD Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Binan) tel (049) 411.1146 1 MANO PO 2 LORD OF THE RING 3 HALF PAST DEAD 4 LASTIKMAN Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771 1 MANO PO 2 LASTIKMAN 3 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 4 RESERVE Cinema 2000 MetroTown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729 1 LASTIKMAN 2 SPIRIT WARRIOR 3 HOME ALONG DA RIBER 4 MANO PO
Pearl Plaza Cinemas (Parañaque) tel 853.4486 1 LASTIKMAN 2 RESERVE 3 RESERVE 4 RESERVE 5 RESERVE 6 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT Golden Pearl THX RESERVE	Maragana CINEMA 10243 (Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 HALF PAST DEAD 3 KERIDA	Magic Star Cinema (Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305 1 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 2 LASTIKMAN 3 HULA MO HULI KO
starmall Movies www.clickthecity.com.ph (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986 1 HALF PAST DEAD 2 LASTIKMAN 3 MANO PO 4 LORD OF THE RING 5 KERIDA	Universal (Manila) tel 733.2470 1 LORD OF THE RING	Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276 1 HALF PAST DEAD 2 RESERVE 3 KERIDA 4 LASTIKMAN Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 HALF PAST DEAD 3 LASTIKMAN 4 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 5 KERIDA
METROPOLIS st r www.clickthecity.com.ph (Alabang) tel 850.4285 1 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 2 MANO PO 3 LASTIKMAN 4 LORD OF THE RING 5 KERIDA 6 HALF PAST DEAD	Dilson (Manila) tel 734.7724 1 KERIDA 2 KERIDA	Olivarez Tri-Cinema (Binan) tel (049) 511.8883 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 LASTIKMAN 3 KERIDA Olivarez Los Baños (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 HALF PAST DEAD 3 LASTIKMAN 4 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 5 KERIDA
PREMIERE CINEMA (Makati City) tel 751.2010 to 13 LORD OF THE RING	Sampaguita (Cubao) tel 911.7888 1 LORD OF THE RING	Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283 1 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 2 MANO PO 3 HOME ALONG DA RIBER 4 LASTIKMAN
Center Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007 1 MANO PO 2 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT	FRC Cinema (Talaba Bacoor Cavite) 1 2	Cabuyao (Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808 1 RESERVE 2 RESERVE
FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL INC tel 930.9515 1 RESERVE 2 KERIDA	Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029 1 KERIDA 2 HULA MO HULI KO	Emperador (Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657 1 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 2 LASTIKMAN 3 MANO PO
Sunshine (FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376 1 HALF PAST DEAD 2 LASTIKMAN 3 RESERVE 4 RESERVE	THE CENTER OF ENTERTAINMENT Araneta	Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790 1 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT 2 LASTIKMAN 3 HULA MO HULI KO 4 HOME ALONG DA RIBER
Farmers Plaza CINEMAS tel 911.3101 loc. 821.8242.8400 1 MANO PO 2 SPIRIT WARRIORS 3 HALF PAST DEAD 4 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 5 DEKADA '70 6 LASTIKMAN	Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03 1 LORD OF THE RING 2 LASTIKMAN 3 HALF PAST DEAD 4 SPIRIT WARRIOR THE SHORT CUT	Cine Nepo Mall (Angeles City) tel (045) 322.3571 1 LASTIKMAN 2 LORD OF THE RING 3 HALF PAST DEAD 4 LORD OF THE RING

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SM CENTERPOINT 7149522-7101416 1 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 2 DEKADA '70 3 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 4 KERIDA 5 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 6 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2 7 HALF PAST DEAD 8 HOT CHICK 9 MANO PO 10 LASTIKMAN	SM CITY CEBU 2313876 (MAMON OBUSAN FOLKLORIC DANCE TROUPE) 2 LIKE MIKE 3 REPLI-KATE 4 HALF PAST DEAD 5 LASTIKMAN 6 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2 7 MANO PO 8 HALF PAST DEAD
SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749 1 HOT CHICK 2 DEKADA '70 3 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 4 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 5 MANO PO 6 LASTIKMAN 7 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 8 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2 9 HALF PAST DEAD 10 KERIDA 11 AGIMAT 12 LORD OF THE RINGS 2	SM CITY ILOILO 3209422 1 DEKADA '70 2 CLOSED 3 SWIMFAN 4 MANO PO 5 LASTIKMAN 6 SPIRIT WARRIORS 2 7 CLOSED 8 REPLI-KATE
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SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452 1 LASTIKMAN 2 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 3 MANO PO 4 RING (JAPANESE) 5 HOT CHICK 6 HALF PAST DEAD 7 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 8 LORD OF THE RINGS 2	SM CINEMA TUTUBAN 2514202 1 LORD OF THE RINGS 2 2 KERIDA 3 HALF PAST DEAD 4 LASTIKMAN
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LORD OF THE RINGS: The Two Towers
10:50 FS/11:20 MF/3:00/6:40/
9:50 LFS/10:20 LMF/1:30 END

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7 LORD OF THE RINGS II
8 MANO PO

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6 LORD OF THE RINGS II
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4 LASTIKMAN
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6 LORD OF THE RINGS II

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3 SPIRIT WARRIORS
4 HALF PAST DEAD
5 LASTIKMAN
6 KERIDA

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Laguna
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2 LORD OF THE RINGS II
3 LASTIKMAN
4 MANO PO
5 KERIDA

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2 VAMPS
3 MANO PO
4 DEKADA '70
5 SPIRIT WARRIORS
6 LASTIKMAN

Iloilo
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1 HULA MO HULI KO
2 LASTIKMAN
3 SWIMFAN
4 SPIRIT WARRIORS
5 REPLI-KATE
6 MANO PO

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Will Randy Santiago move to GMA 7?

From page A24

So I chided him, "Wow! Is coming out of your shell your new year's resolution?" He smiled and went on to regale us with his hilarious stories.

What I found endearing about Aljo is that he has remained a "probinsyano" at heart and he hasn't lost his charming Visayan accent.

If you catch him off-guard, you'll agree with me that he could pass for a comedian. He even joked around and pulled a compact powder from his pocket and pretended to be gay.

I asked him, "Don't tell me when you're on location you retouch in front of the public?"

He laughs, "They see me powder my nose."

His sense of humor serves to break the seriousness of a newscaster's job.

He horsed around some more and said, "Don't I look like a sacristan with my black cross pendant?"

I kidded him, "If you were a sacristan, many girls would want to be nuns."

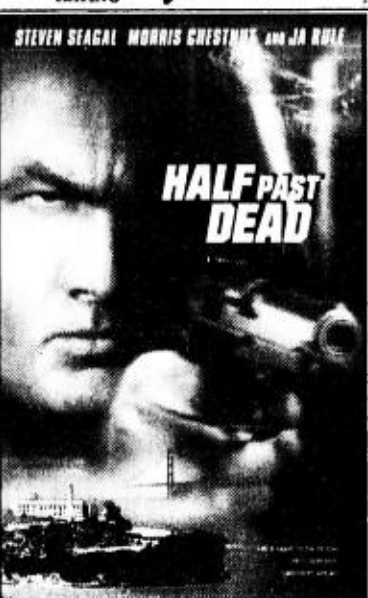
I've never admired Aljo more than I did that night. I salute a simple guy like him who works his way up and doesn't let the trappings of success turn into a trap.

Personal

HAPPY birthday to the only permanent guy in my life, whom I know will never unlove me... mi hijo Ice.

For feedback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com

MTRCB RATING PG-13



HALF PAST DEAD

Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

Special New Year Presentation!

Steven Seagal back in Action

International action superstar Steven Seagal is back with a vengeance. This time he plays undercover FBI agent Sascha Petrosevich in the brand-new non-stop, slam-bang action blockbuster from Columbia Pictures, "Half Past Dead."

The California Penal Authority has reopened Alcatraz, the most notorious prison in history. A disgruntled prison bureaucrat-turned-criminal mastermind heads a renegade commando team to infiltrate the high-tech fortress in order to force a death-row inmate to reveal the whereabouts of \$200 million worth of gold.

Seagal teams with rap artist Ja Rule to rally the Alcatraz inmates to stop the invaders - before they murder the Supreme Court Justice, who is in The Rock to witness an execution.

The fast-paced, action-packed thriller also stars sexy Filipino Hollywood actress Nia Peeples as a deadly gun-firing, knife-throwing martial artist.

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MTRCB RATING PG-13



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LORD OF THE RINGS "TWO TOWERS" GP 12:30, 4:10, 7:50	LORD OF THE RINGS "TWO TOWERS" GP 1:10, 4:50	LORD OF THE RINGS "TWO TOWERS" GP 10:50, 2:30

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CINEMA 2

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ROB SCHNEIDER IS THE HOT CHICK



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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	LASTIKMAN
Ali 2	DEKADA '70
Ali 3	HALF PAST DEAD
Ali 4	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
Ali 5	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
Ali 6	THE HOT CHICK
Ali 7	MANO PO
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	HALF PAST DEAD
Farmers 2	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
ARANETA COLISEUM	
JAN 15	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
JAN 21, 22, & 24	WORLD SLASHER CUP 2003
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE
ELEPHANT WORLD	
JAN 15	3 PM
JAN 16	10 AM / 3 PM
JAN 17	10 AM / 3 PM / 5 PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA

EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MASARAP NA PUGAD / SEX LOVE
ODEON	HALF PAST DEAD
ODEON-2	PAMASAK BUTAS / EVANGELINE 14
ROBEN	KERIDA
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAPATAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	RAIN OF FIRE / THE TOUCH

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET-2	LASTIKMAN
QUEZON-1	KERIDA
REMAR	HALF PAST DEAD
REMAR-2	KERIDA

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
B	HULA MO, HULI KO
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	639-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	HALF PAST DEAD
CINEMA-2	LORD OF THE RINGS 2

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	DEKADA '70
CINEMA-2	KERIDA
CINEMA-3	SPIRIT WARRIORS 2
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA-6	AGMAT
CINEMA-7	SHADIN SOCCER
CINEMA-8	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	HALF PAST DEAD
CINEMA-12	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-14	MANO PO
CINEMA-15	LASTIKMAN

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING MINDS

UNIWIIDE COASTAL MALL (PARANAQUE)

CINEMA-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-4	MEIN IN BLACK II
	SELDA

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

We're just always a step ahead

Bad test in the mouth

THIS is the best time for us to settle, once and for all, this ticklish issue.

For so many years now, this exceedingly sensitive issue served as the high-cholesterol fast-food snack of our legislative body, making it the customary political diet of our overweight government, only to be vomited in the neglected washroom of public opinion.

And the issue is, what is the accurate shoe size of Sen. Robert Jaworski.

For according to rumors, it changes faster than he can change sides from opposition to administration senator—or vice versa and versa vice.

BUT on another issue, which is the so-called Chacha, our beloved lawmakers are trying their level best to tinker with the Constitution once and for all.

Written in 1986, and ratified by the people in 1987, the antique Constitution now approaches the ripe old age of 16 years.

That's already too old for a lot of lawmakers when they carry out charity work in karaoke bars in Quezon City.

But that's beside the point. The point is, lawmakers know very well that Chacha is being consigned fast to the museum of dances in karaoke bars all over the country.

That the "in" gyration now for those geriatrics is the "ketchup dance," the lawmakers can see for themselves when they perform "humanitarian" work in those bars.

Meaning, if people who eat vegetables are called "vegetarian," then those congressmen who eat humans are called "humanitarian."

Our talented lawmakers must do the Chacha now. Sooner or later, before you can even blink, the ketchup dance will be gone, to be replaced by the vinegar-with-crushed-garlic dance.

ANYWAY, we have to give our congressmen the benefit of the doubt. It is possible that, in tinkering with the Constitution, they are not just looking after their own interests.

They are also trying hard to look after the interest of the Constitution. The lawmakers of other countries do not look after the interest of the Constitution. I tell you!

Still, I don't want to suggest that, if they only want to get busy with the Chacha because they have nothing better to do, they should

BREAKTIME



Conrado R. Banal III

just play with themselves.

It's just that the economy needs reforms, bossing, and so if we spend all our congressional (huge) budget on Chacha, what will happen to us?

To think, we needed a thousand economic bills only ever since Lapu-Lapu's best friend Magellan was still a boy scout.

For instance, this Congress has passed so many laws, you can actually count them all with one finger—the middle finger.

THAT'S why Gloriaetta can't wait for 2004 anymore to do something for the country.

She must try to get priority bills from Congress.

Reports say that Gloriaetta is trying to get the LDP senators, headed by Sen. Edgardo Angara, to her side.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, who always manages to sound both annoyed both in media and in real life, does not exactly jump for joy.

My idol Joker does not like it, apparently, when Gloriaetta does not even bother to consult with her allies in the Senate, who are the so-called administration senators.

It probably escaped the good senator's notice that Gloriaetta never really got a lot of the reforms which she laid down to Congress from the start, even from her so-called allies.

For that is the test of true partnership. It is give and take. Her allies never really delivered. I guess it should only leave a bad test in Gloriaetta's mouth.

NOW if, as Joker claims, Gloriaetta wants to perform the Chacha number with certain members of her own party, Lakas, I say it is nobody else's call but her own now.

What has she got to lose—her allies? She never had any, really, for nobody as much as listened to her, much less supported her truly.

Who needs allies when you never really get anything from them, anyway, except perhaps a little deflection of flaks here and there from

issues like Placito and Impsa?

Today in business, moreover, they are willing to credit every move of Gloriaetta as imbued with nothing but pure national interest.

For instance, when Gloriaetta went to the PSE last week, everybody half expected her to distribute free medicine, or land titles, or IRA. She did not.

Clearly, she only meant to pep up the stock market, which has been in the psychiatric basement ever since a certain Dante Tan was accused of having his thrill by manipulating it.

Like it or not, Gloriaetta can do anything, and the influential business groups will not be suspicious anymore. She can do the Chacha. So what if she doesn't get the votes!

BUT if Gloriaetta professes nothing but national interest at heart nowadays, maybe she must also consider public sentiment.

We are suspicious of the Chacha. We have been suspicious of it from the start, some 10 years ago, when it was first brought up, as the Constitution was only five years old.

Public suspicion has something to do with the terms of office of our dearly beloved public officials.

Look, the congressmen themselves want to do the amendments, by declaring themselves a constituent assembly.

Now another term for "constituent assembly" is this: We want to do it ourselves, although we may not recognize the Constitution from sexy karaoke GROs.

If that's the case, and our congressmen are not exactly, uhm, "experts" on the Constitution, why must they amend the Constitution by themselves in the first place?

I don't know. For our own benefit, do you think? Me, I'll stick with the issue of Jaworski's shoe size.

LISTEN to this: Smart is taking the countryside by storm with its satellite telephone. For only P5,000 per set, the gadget is attracting buyers even from among the poorest local governments. For instance, each barangay in Tawi-Tawi bought a telephone. The government paid for it.

Attached to an ordinary telephone set, the satellite phone gives every family of OFWs in every barangay the means to call overseas. They don't have to go to the malls in the city.

Gokongwei firm taps ING, Salomon to handle \$100-M debt notes issue

By Doris C. Dumlaog

UNIVERSAL Robina Corp., the branded food unit of the Gokongwei group, has tapped global investment banks ING Baring and Salomon Smith Barney to handle its offering of US dollar notes worth about \$100 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, URC said that the two foreign banks would act as joint book-runners and lead managers. This means that the two banks would be tasked to look for investors that will buy

URC's debt notes.

"The offering will allow the company to take advantage of the current low interest rate for raising term financing," URC said in a statement yesterday.

URC, however, did not provide details of the offering.

It was earlier reported that URC had planned to raise \$100 million through the issuance of five-year bonds.

URC is beefing up its cash horde as part of its effort to expand into offshore markets and become the "first Filipino-owned

regional branded food powerhouse."

The Gokongwei unit currently has marketing, manufacturing and distribution capabilities in Thailand, Malaysia and China as well as a marketing presence in Hong Kong and Singapore. It started to build new confectionery plants in Shanghai and Jakarta last year and is now studying to penetrate the Vietnamese market.

The company's strategy is to grow geographically and take advantage of the lowering of tariffs

in the Asean region because of the Asean Free Trade Agreement, which has made it possible to expand the market without having to reinvest in manufacturing facilities.

In the domestic market, URC leads in most other branded consumer foods as of last year. As of last year, it had a 39 percent domestic share in candies, 26 percent in chocolates, 23 percent in biscuits, 48 percent in snacks, 49 percent in cup noodles and 45 percent in coffee mix.

WIRELESS BROADBAND MARKET

New group acquires Nextel's RP unit for \$200M

By Abigail L. Ho

TRUNK radio operator Nextel Communications Phil. Inc. is set to evolve into a wireless broadband service firm after technology consortium Maxwealth Consultant Ltd. acquired a majority stake in the company for \$200 million.

Former Nextel parent firm Nextel International Inc. was left with a minority stake

in the company after the consortium composed of Swedish, American, Finnish and Filipino entrepreneurs bought into its Philippine arm.

The new company, Next Mobile, is currently undergoing a total overhaul of its systems and operations as it now eyes the wireless broadband market as its main business.

"We see a huge potential for wireless broadband in the Philippines. The cellular phone indeed is a precursor to what the digital revolution intends to achieve—individual and team productivity in motion. The key is to bet on a platform on which a number of services can be delivered to a very focused market segment," Next Mobile chair Mel Velarde said in a statement yesterday.

He added that the company would be capitalizing on Nextel's existing integrated digital enhanced network (IDEN) technology that enables users to take advantage of four services: two-way radio, phone, short messaging service or text

messaging, and Internet protocol-based data services.

Although Next Mobile would now be providing services similar to those currently being offered by cellular service providers Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc., Velarde said the company did not see these two firms as Next Mobile's direct competitors.

"In fact, we benefit from their brave moves to revolutionize mass communication through the cellular phone and texting. Because of them and of people's unlimited aspirations, there are enormous opportunities for niche players like ourselves," he said.

Velarde said Next Mobile's "revolutionary" IDEN technology would provide its clients with full Internet connectivity as well as their own corporate enterprise information systems.

Because of these, even mobile and remote users could fully interact with their office networks as if they were connected to their offices' local area networks.

RP urged to amend law ...

From page B1

rorists, kidnappers, traffickers, smugglers and corrupt officials.

The FATF, in its meeting in June, had retained the Philippines on its watchlist as it sought amendments to the country's one-year-old law against money laundering.

One of the more important amendments being pushed by the FATF is the relaxation of the country's strict 46-year-old law on deposit secrecy.

"The revival of the sanctions against us would make our international transactions very difficult as any money coming through and from the Philippines would be subjected to much scrutiny," Finance Secretary

Jose Isidro Camacho said in an earlier interview.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura had also warned Congress that even the dollar remittances of the country's overseas Filipino workers would be affected by the revival of FATF sanctions.

The FATF, in its official communication with Buenaventura in June last year, also sought a reduction in the threshold amount on reporting of suspicious transactions to P500,000 from P4 million or possibly not to put any amount and that all suspicious transactions be reported to the Anti-Money Laundering Council chaired by the BSP chief.

Buenaventura said the international watchdog against dirty money had informed him that the two amendments must be made before the Philippines could be removed from the watchlist.

From June to September 2001, the influential members of the FATF had decided to impose economic sanctions against the Philippines for its failure to enact an anti-money-laundering law. Republic Act 9116 was approved on Sept. 30 but became effective in Oct. 17.

The sanctions made the country's international transactions more rigorous and difficult that even the dollar remittances of overseas Filipino workers experienced some delays.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, January 13, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	18	18	17.75	18	20,900
Bank of the Phil. Islands	37	37	36	36.5	970,200
China Banking Corp.	625	630	625	630	2,900
Citibank Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	28	28	27.5	27.5	93,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	31	30.5	31	213,500
Philippine National Bank	26	26	24.5	25	12,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	17.5	17.25	17.5	13,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1260	1270	1260	1265	2,400
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.72	220,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	980	1010	980	1010	16,930
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	13.75	13.75	13.5	13.5	18,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.42	0.43	0.42	0.42	1,450,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	470	475	470	475	29,210
ISM Communications Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.016	0.016	800,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.23	0.23	0.2	0.2	750,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	315	322.5	312.5	312.5	186,820
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	26,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	9.8	9.9	9.3	9.4	316,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	13.25	12	12.25	4,736,100
Petrone Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	1,168,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	1,150,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.48	1,056,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.44	2.48	2.44	2.46	688,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	200,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	310,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.14	2.14	1.82	2.12	151,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	16.75	294,800
La Tondela Distillers Inc.	35.5	35.5	35.5	35.5	102,200
RPM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	250,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58.5	59	58.5	59	59,500
San Miguel Corp. B	65.5	65.5	65	65.5	404,700
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.45	4.55	4.45	4.45	2,471,000
Aboliz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.3	2.28	2.28	426,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	5,000
Bengpres Holdings Corp.	0.17	0.17	0.16	0.165	3,630,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.13	6,950,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	10	10.5	10	10	1,823,000
Ionics Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	600,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.6	0.59	0.6	4,880,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.17	0.17	3,230,000
Music Corp.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	1,400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
SPI Technologies Inc.	12	12	11.75	11.75	27,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	90,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	50,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	170,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13.5	13.75	13.5	13.5	387,700
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	5	4.85	4.95	3,646,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.15	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.125	0.125	1,300,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.08	1.02	1.04	13,550,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	100,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	1,000,000
Phil-Estate Land Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.135	0.135	300,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5	5	4.9	4.95	4,276,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	100,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev'l	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	15,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	6,690,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.225	0.225	0.22	0.22	2,740,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	80,000,000
SHARES					
Bank & Fin Svc	1,568,220				67,569,100.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	66,480,030				223,696,370.00
PRO	24,372,000				53,830,800.00
Mining	109,445,000				2,415,300.00
Oil	82,000,000				212,000.00
GRAND TOTALS:	283,865,250				347,723,570.00
AVERAGES					
Bank & Fin Svc	384.74				DOWN 3.03
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,501.14				DOWN 2.33
PRO	448.63				DOWN 0.49
Mining	1,289.18				DOWN 6.83
Oil	1.08				DOWN 0.02
All Shares Index	651.27				UP 8.02
Composite	1,055.05				DOWN 3.25

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Composite	1,055.05	DOWN 3.25

Hand over water distribution facilities, MWSS tells Maynilad

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE METROPOLITAN Waterworks and Sewerage System has formally requested Maynilad Water Services Inc. to hand over its concession area to the government pending arbitration hearings on the matter.

"In the absence of an early resolution of our differences or your withdrawal of your notice of early termination, we are ready to discuss arrangements for the orderly return of the concession to the MWSS on terms acceptable to both parties and the public inter-

est," MWSS administrator Orlando Hondrade said in a letter to Maynilad president Rafael Alunan III.

Maynilad, a subsidiary of Benpres Holdings Corp., earlier filed a notice to terminate its contract to manage half of the MWSS' service area in Metro Manila.

In his letter, Hondrade accused Maynilad of breaching its contract with the MWSS.

"Without prejudice to this position and our own claims in respect of your breach of the concession agreement, we recognize that it is not to the interest of the

consumers of Manila to force you to continue to provide essential services when you are plainly unable and/or unwilling to do so," Hondrade told Alunan.

Maynilad has yet to respond to Hondrade's letter.

Maynilad decided to terminate its concession agreement with the MWSS on Dec. 9, citing its mounting debts, largely as a result of the peso's depreciation against the dollar, and inability to remain viable.

Maynilad is supposed to pay around \$800 million worth of concession fees.

The MWSS uses these fees to cover its debts, that Maynilad and another concessionaire, Manila Water Co. Inc., assumed when they won contracts to provide water distribution services in the capital region.

Maynilad stopped paying its concession fees in March 2001.

Since these loans are covered by a sovereign guarantee, the government will now have to pay for these concession fees.

The MWSS has approved Maynilad's P14 per cubic meter increase, but Maynilad is no longer interested in it.

RP, UK sign agreement on sustainable energy

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy signed yesterday a memorandum of understanding with the United Kingdom's energy agency to promote research, development and transfer of technology on sustainable energy, as well as cooperation in the privatization and management of the local power sector.

In a statement, Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. said the memorandum would pave the way for stronger cooperation be-

tween the Philippines and the United Kingdom on the technologies of renewable energy and of cleaner fossil fuel and on techniques of power sector management.

Perez said to realize the agreement, an inter-government committee would be formed—a "center for excellence"—that would serve as a hub for energy technologies.

He said a database would also be set up in the Philippines to make technology transfer easier and faster.

Perez also said the MOU would facilitate joint projects in the use of indigenous sources of energy, he said.

"The UK energy industry is well advanced down the part of deregulation," Perez said. "We can learn from their experiences and tap their expertise and resources to make our own energy sector reforms successful."

The MOU was signed in Malacañang after UK Minister of Trade and Industry Brian Wilson paid a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Perez said the President also urged the British government to encourage its energy firms to participate in the privatization of the National Power Corp.'s assets.

The energy department sent in November a trade mission to Europe to promote investment opportunities in renewable energy.

The DOE said the mission to the United Kingdom and The Netherlands was aimed at drawing investors to projects involving geothermal, mini-hydro, wind, solar, ocean and bio-mass resources.

Banks press approval of securitization law

BANKS are asking Congress to hasten the passage of the securitization and corporate recovery bills to complement the recently approved special-purpose vehicle law.

In an interview, Bankers Association of the Philippines executive director Leonilo Coronel said these two measures would allow banks to maximize the potential benefits of the special-purpose vehicle law.

The law provides tax and other incentives to banks and other financial institutions that will get rid of their non-performing assets, including bad loans and foreclosed properties, through a special-purpose vehicle or an asset management company.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said banks were likely to dispose of P200 billion worth of bad assets over the next six months through the special-purpose vehicle law.

Bankers, however, have said that for banks to take full advantage of the law, their non-performing loans should not be subject to litigation and their special-purpose vehicles should be allowed to securitize the assets.

The proposed securitization and corporate recovery laws are expected to address these concerns.

Central bank statistics show that at least P50 billion out of P270 billion worth of non-performing loans in the banking system are tied up in court

disputes. At the same time, there have been few transactions involving securitization of assets.

Securitization is the process by which assets are sold on a "without-recourse" basis by the seller to a special-purpose vehicle and the issuance of asset-backed securities that depend for their payment on cash flow from the assets sold in accordance with the securitization plan.

The corporate recovery bill now pending in Congress defines the rights of debtors and creditors in formal debt relief proceedings and provides the guidelines to facilitate the resolution of debt workouts. *Elena R. Torrijos*

AOL Time Warner's Steve Case bows out

NEW YORK—AOL Time Warner Inc. chair Steve Case said on Sunday he decided to step down so he would not be a distraction at the company he helped turn into the world's largest media business.

In a telephone interview, Case said he was concerned frenzied speculation about his role could distract the company ahead of its annual meeting in May.

"I just felt that even though things had quieted down there was a possibility things would pick back up again as we got close to the May (annual) meeting," Case told Reuters. "If it did that would create uncertainty and this company can't afford any distractions. There are a lot of challenges we face. We need to focus on those, not some debate about Steve Case."

Case acknowledged things did not go as planned following AOL's \$106.2-billion purchase of Time Warner, which he championed as a transforming deal marrying the Internet with traditional media.

The Internet pioneer turned top media executive also played down the pressure he was under to step down.

"In reality, despite all this swirl, in the past year only one investor came to me and suggested I step aside and only one director came to me and suggested I step aside," Case said. "So maybe there was some smoke but less fire than peo-



STEVE Case, co-founder of America Online Inc. and an architect of its merger with Time Warner.

ple perceived. It's been clear to me consistently and even now that I had the overwhelming support of the board."

Case told the board and chief executive Richard Parsons this weekend that he planned to step down, effective in May.

The decision came after the Internet visionary, who brought e-mail to the masses, faced months of criticism about creating a merger that by most accounts was a failure.

His exit completes the departure

of the triumvirate of executives credited with putting America Online and Time Warner together, which included former chief executive Gerald Levin and former chief operating officer Bob Pittman.

"Although I prefer being chairman, and I'll miss not being chairman and I'm obviously disappointed by it, I still will continue to play a role," Case told Reuters.

Case, 44, will continue as a director at the company and will still serve as co-chair of the strategic committee. He recommended the board take the four months until May to decide on who, if anyone, would fill his shoes as chair.

"Perhaps it's a lesson learned—even though you think you may be right, if the environment is such and the facts are such, it requires you to take a more pragmatic way and perhaps a more selfless view. That is what you have to do," Case said.

"My case, it's about putting the company's interests first."

America Online, once seen as the combined company's crown jewel, has become the weak link at the world's largest media company. A sharp slowdown in advertising spending and subscriber growth at the unit have offset strength at the company's other businesses, including film and cable networks.

Reuters

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Opec lifts output by 7% to tame oil prices

VIENNA—Opec on Sunday agreed to raise production to stave off an oil price shock threatened by a strike in Venezuela and war in Iraq.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries lifted output by 7 percent, adding 1.5 million barrels a day for a new 10-member limit of 24.5 million bpd, at the top end of expectations.

"We hope the agreement will produce a reasonable price for consumers and send a very strong message to the market to prevent panic," said Opec president Abdullah al-Attiyah.

The new oil will only go part of the way to compensate for an estimated two-million-barrel-a-day stoppage from Venezuela.

That's because Caracas was granted its share of the higher limit and because many others in Opec had little—or no—spare capacity.

"Lack of capacity means actual additional oil will probably be less than half that promised on paper," said Gary Ross, chief executive of US consultancy PIRA Energy.

"Opec production will still be less than if had there been no Venezuelan disruption."

Political sensitivities in the cartel meant the extra oil was divided pro-rata among all 10 with quotas, but key to flows now would be how quickly—and how far—leading producer Saudi Arabia would open the taps.

Riyadh would count Sunday's deal

as a victory. Most others in Opec wanted an addition of just one million barrels per day, but Saudi wanted to prevent oil spiking to heights that might harm world economic growth and hit crude demand.

Washington made a public appeal for more oil after US crude recently hit a two-year peak of over \$33 a barrel.

"Opec has proved market responsive and that's good news for the world economy," said Peter Gignoux of Salomon Schroder Smith Barney bank.

Saudi controls most of the world's spare capacity and can only count on the United Arab Emirates for any substantial help. Algeria and Nigeria may be able to pump a little more. *Reuters*

REAL ESTATE

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Attracting good luck in feng shui books

By Tessa R. Salazar

FOR FENG shui experts and believers, the house determines the future. If the house has "bad vibes"—meaning it isn't built according to the rules of feng shui, then the future of the house dwellers would also not be favorable. If the house was built in consultation with a geomancer—or a feng shui expert—with every detail of the design, lot and the construction process consulted with the expert, then the future's all set for the family.

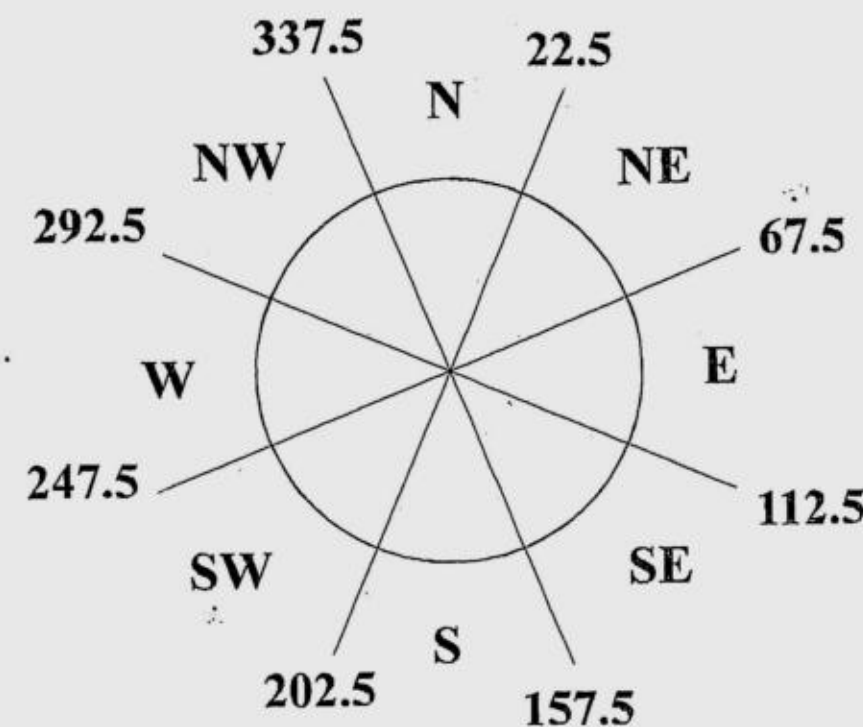
It is feng shui that makes or breaks the property—just ask many Chinese buyers who seek the approval of geomancers before doing anything with the land.

Which brings us to an important point. Whether they believe it or not, real estate developers should take geomancers seriously, if not for the detailed beliefs in good or bad luck, then for the throng of moneyed Chinese who make or break property decisions with the thumbs-up or thumbs-down of a feng shui expert.

Renowned geomancer

Victor Dy is a renowned geomancer who teaches in Germany and teaches one module at the Chamber of Real Estate Builders Association's La Salle Real Estate Management seminar. He recently shared with the *Inquirer* feng shui tips on how to channel the good energy—the chi—into the house and avoid letting the bad energy in.

Dy, who designs and selects lots and does layouts of offices, factories and subdivisions, says if one knows how to chart and design, the good energy would lure in good things such as helpful friends and good opportunities for investments. He said the wrong selection of a lot be-



FENG shui guide to directions

gins an uphill struggle.

2 schools of thought

There are two schools of thought in feng shui. One is the "three harmony" school and the three conditions given by the three harmonies. Another is the flying stars, which Dy says is the most commonly used now.

In feng shui, there are 12 horoscopic animals that occupy certain directions in the compass. Goats occupy the southwest-south direction—the seat of the governing officer for 2003.

"One should not renovate on that section (of the house) this year because (that means you are asking) the governing officer to leave, which is not good. That also means one cannot construct a house in the southwest-south section (of the lot or subdivision)."

Don't do anything on the opposite

side, the northeast-north, either. Dy said the energy from the southwest-south is strong, and whatever is opposite is also strong in a negative aspect.

3 killers

The entire west side is also considered the "three shiah" or the three killers. A house or lot facing east (use the street as your reference), and which means its back is facing west, is unfavorable.

One shouldn't also bury their dead in a plot facing east.

"If you bury (this way) you might have a string of burials for the year because of the 'three killers.' That means (your family) can suffer three deaths," he said.

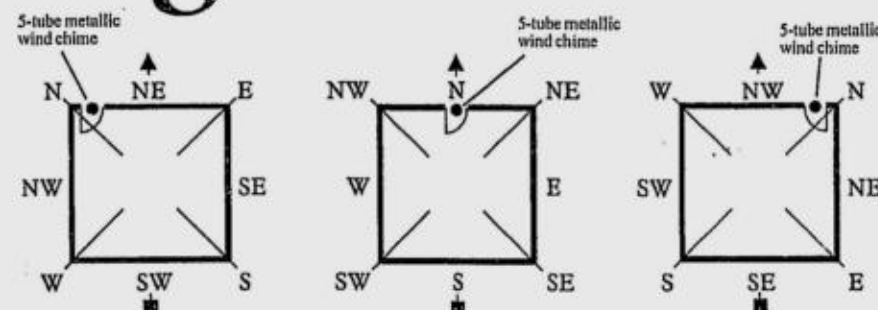
Dy stressed the importance of being precise in measuring directions using the compass. Wrong measurements can spell bad luck.

The door entrance is likewise important. If the door is not correctly oriented to the right direction, then that mistake defines the life of everybody who lives in the house.

'9 flying stars' prediction

Dy also pointed out the "nine flying stars" prediction. He said this year the north is "no good" because of a sickly star and this can precipitate sickness in humans. A yellow star—a disastrous star—is in the southeast. The only place that is good for 2003, he said, is in the south.

This means that if your property faces the south, then that would be good. If the



A SICK star is stationed in the north and will induce stomach related sickness to the tenants. The victim will be a middle-aged man. Hang a 5-tube metallic wind chime to be chimed at least 6 times every day.

property's back faces south, then that is also good.

The north is where the sick star is found and will induce stomach-related sickness for the tenants. The victim will be a middle-aged man. The suggested remedy is to hang a five-tube metallic wind chime to be struck at least 6 times every day.

Avoid renovating in the northeast-north section of your house. If your door is at the midsection of NE, i.e., between 37.5 degrees and 52.5 degrees, installing a low-watt green light after the door can enhance opportunities for celebrations.

A scholarly star is stationed in the east. Placing your desk here will enhance your chance for promotion. Students will perform well in their studies when they position their study desks to the east.

Main doors facing the east will enhance scholarly pursuits, and placing a live plant next to the door can hasten promotion.

A disastrous star is found southeast and no renovation should take place here. A lot with its back facing southeast cannot be built upon. Doing so would precipitate negative events.

Dy said a burial plot situated southeast cannot be used for burial this year or the family will experience continuous demise of family members up to five persons.

The use of this plot should be discouraged at all cost during 2003. The solution is to look for a plot situated south.

If your main door is in the SE and if you have a side or rear door in your house, use the alternative door this year. If not, hang a five-tube metallic wind chime above your SE door.

Propitious star

• **South.** Dy said that in the south direction, a propitious star is stationed and will enhance the resourcefulness and creativity of the tenants. It also connotes opportunity for travel. If your main door is in the south, install an aerated aquarium with six fishes to enhance your chance for travel.

• **Southwest.** There should be no renovation in the SW-S section of your house for this is the seat of the Grand

Duke or the position of the horoscopic sign of Goat, the officer in charge in 2003.

Dy explained this also means that lots sited in the SW (rear of the property is to the direction SW) cannot be built upon. If your neighbor in the SW of your house is building something there, you would also bear the brunt of such violation.

"If the main door of your house is in the SW, place a red mat after the door to offset a combative energy that can induce litigation, high blood pressure or urinary diseases," Dy said.

The west section is where a propitious star flies, but its positive feature is offset by the three-sha/killer chi in the west in 2003.

"It is bad to be seated with your back or sleep with your head to the west wall this year. Change your position to face the west. If your main door is in the west put a jar with seven coins in it near the door to catch and generate fortune," he said.

It is in the northwest direction where there is a fortune star that lingers for the whole week. Place your cash register or safe or money box in this position.

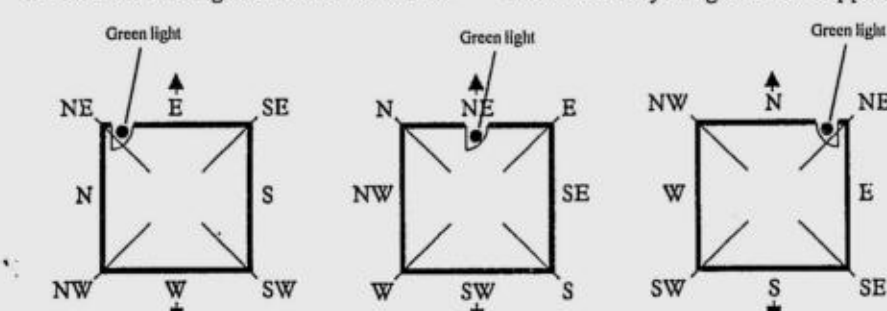
Dy said that if the main door is in the NW, install an aerated aquarium with six fishes and underneath the aquarium, place a dish of lathered water. This will neutralize whatever consequence that might result after you have made money on your undertaking.

Fake geomancers

Dy warned that fake geomancers abound, especially in the Philippines when many jump in the feng shui bandwagon. When they see that feng shui is profitable, or they think they know something about astrology, they try to act as if they were feng shui masters.

"They should know people believe in them, and that they should realize that they have responsibilities for these people's lives," he said.

Dy advises developers that building houses and roads is not a game because "you may be playing on people's lives. The people's future is at stake here," he said.



AVOID having renovation in the northeast-north section of your house. If your door is located at the mid-section of NE, i.e., between 37.5° to 52.5°, install a low-wattage green light after the door can enhance the opportunity for celebrations.

Home finance firm resumes sale of unpaid homeloans

THE NATIONAL Home Mortgage Finance Corp. will publish starting this month the list of delinquent housing accounts preparatory to their sale to interested buyers.

The move is aimed to their sale at sustaining the continuous disposition of the agency's nonperforming mortgage assets while giving the defaulting home borrowers the first priority to reacquire, refinance or update their accounts under the agency's available repayment schemes.

The disposition of these defaulted housing accounts was approved recently by the NHMFC board of directors under the agency's Assignment of Mortgage Credits and Foreclosure Rights Program.

Descending order

Priority in the sale or assignment of mortgage rights, generally in descending order, will be given to the following:

- Foreclosed accounts
- *Dacion-en-pago* accounts, those with no payments since loan takeout
- Defaulted restructured accounts with arrearages of more than three months
- Defaulted accounts with arrearages of more than 24 months and the housing units are unoccupied
- Defaulted accounts with nonpayments of more than 24 months and the housing units are occupied both by the original borrowers or owners, or those without authority from the same
- Those other accounts as may be determined by the NHMFC management.

Prior notice

Under the program, an original housing loan borrower shall be given prior notice on the sale or assignment of his delinquent account, which may be done either through personal service of said notice; by registered mail, or by publication in generally circulated newspapers.

Said borrower shall be allowed either to fully pay, restructure or update the payment of the account within 15 days from the date of service of notice, otherwise, the account shall be sold to third party-direct buyers through public bidding. The NHMFC shall not entertain agents and brokers under the program.

The human-scale principle

By Candido P. Filio
Contributor

IN HIS "The Language of Cities" (New York: The Viking Press, 1971), Charles Abrams defines human scale thus:

That combination of qualities that gives man's works an appropriate relationship to man's size and feelings. The architect Yamasaki, when he was asked why he designed two 110-story buildings for New York City's World Trade Center instead of one 220-story building, he reportedly countered that he wanted "to keep it in human scale." Great height and bulk are thought to be the prime destroyers of human scale in cities, and the continued construction of sunless valleys of concrete to be widening the gap between man-size and man-works; but even skyscrapers can be designed so as to enhance rather than diminish man's sense of grandeur and importance. Besides, great vertical densities contribute to human scale in other ways—by making mass transit more feasible and by helping to shorten the work journey. The answer lies in sensitive design and site planning, and in the provision of compensatory retreats for refuge and contrast.

I studied and lived in the United States in 1969-70 as the first Filipino scholar-fellow at the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. My grant from Ford Foundation was generous enough to allow my family to accompany me in Cambridge. But we did not have the chance to go around New York City; we just had a brief stopover at La Guardia Airport, while en route from Boston to Memphis, where we visited some relatives before coming home in late May 1970.

Very interesting trip

In August-September 1993, I had a very interesting trip to New York as the lone entry of the Philippines in the Second World Scrabble Championship. It was memorable because I had a reunion with my son Roland, who led a three-man Scrabble team from the Gulf States. In fact, a TV network featured our father-son game, which I won—naturally. (Two years earlier, in September 1991, Roland

and I met also in London for the First World Scrabble Championship.) What really made my trip to New York this time very memorable was my chance to get more acquainted with the largest American metropolis and visit the World Trade Center.

Now, the World Trade Center—which disappeared from the face of the earth last Sept. 11, 2001, compliments of Osama bin Laden—rose 411 meters over lower Manhattan. Completed in 1973, its twin towers were the tallest buildings in the world until 1974, when they were surpassed by the Sears Tower in Chicago. Designed by Minoru Yamasaki and Emery Roth, WTC cost US\$750 million to build. Serious planners and planning students have to know the significance and legacy of the World Trade Center in development-planning theory and history.

Key principle

Yamasaki did not elaborate on what he meant by "human scale." But it was adopted all over the world as a key principle of development planning. Urbanists and other development experts tried to flesh out human scale by first defining what would be beyond it or how it might be lost. They agreed that for physical developments, it could be lost through excessive sizes or excessive heights. For transport systems, it could be lost through excessive speeds; thus, the Supersonic Transport was a commercial flop.

Literally, dehumanizing structures and spaces violate the principle of the human scale. Physically, Brasilia is beautiful, but it is dehumanizing, because the city was designed for cars—not for people. Even some boulevards in Madrid are considered beyond human scale, because they are too wide and unsafe for pedestrians to cross.

In some of his famous works—notably, "Ekistics: An Introduction to the Science of Human Settlements" (Garden City, NY: Oxford University Press, 1968) the Greek architect Konstantinos Doxiadis—Father of Modern Human Settlements—clarified the concept of human scale through the ekistic scale. This is the hierarchy—in ascending order—of human settlements from polis—through metropolis, mega-



THIS photo taken in September 1993 shows the writer on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River with the World Trade Center on the right background.

opolis, and eperopolis—to ecumenopolis. Doxiadis was after the size of the habitat where human interactions would be optimized—i.e., where people would realize the maximum satisfaction of their human needs for employment, living, studying, or recreation—yet, the negative effects of commuting, pollution and other environmental hazards would be minimized.

Thus, the human-scale principle has shown that the ordinary city or polis—not Nene Pimentel's nominal or artificial city—is too small a habitat, while the megalopolis is too large. Ergo, the metropolis is just right!

This Doxiadis contribution has led to the "twin city" concept. For instance, an established megalopolis, like Shanghai, was deliberately broken up into two metropolises. I questioned twinning for the largest Chinese settlement, because twins are conceived at the same time. But in the United States, some "twin cities" are planned from the very start.

To be sure, in the late '60s even before the memorable Doxiadis studies were published—the world was already preoccupied coping with megalopolis. Thus, in 1967, H. Wentworth Eldredge edited "Taming Megalopolis" (New York: Anchor Books). In 1969, Arnold H. Whittick published "The New Towns: The Answer to Megalopolis" (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press). When I was studying at MIT in 1969-70, coping with megalopolis was a favorite topic for discussion.

Terrible mistake

Eldredge's volume is specially interesting because of its chapter, "Requiem for Zoning," by W. Reps. Traditional zoning, which we still practice in the Philippines, was invented by the Americans in 1915. So, in 1965, there was a massive movement to evaluate 50 years of zoning in the United States. The verdict was unanimous: it was a mistake. Seymour I. Toll published an entire book on this terrible mistake in 1969, "The Zoned American" (New York: Grossman).

So far, impact zoning is considered the most viable alternative to traditional zoning. When she was my student at SURP, Delia Josef prepared a very good study on impact zoning.

In Thailand, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration is even building 10 metropolitan centers within Greater Bangkok to deal with urban problems simultaneously for all time. In the so-called Metropolitan Manila (Development Authority), then Chair Benjamin Abalos (he is now with the Commission on Elections) and his gang of politicians and lawyers dealt with urban problems *coup par coup*—blow by blow. For instance, they try to solve traffic problems *kuno* by reducing the volume of vehicles. BMA would solve traffic problems in Greater Bangkok by reducing the demand for transport.

While the whole world grieves over the loss of lives at the World Trade Center, as a development-planning teacher, I grieve the loss of a great aid in teaching the human-scale principle.

800 new high-tech school buildings to be built

By Ronnie Lorejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZIPI CITY—Stronger and more versatile than structures using blocks and wood frames, and faster to build. These are just some of the prominent features of about 800 new and high-tech school buildings that will rise like mushrooms all throughout the country starting this month, according to architect Danilo Manalang, assistant regional director for Bicol of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Breakthrough

"This is a breakthrough in the country's education system since for the very first time, public school students will experience a very comfortable ambience of a suitable learning venue," Manalang said. "This is not actually a cozy or computerized establishment, but a simple, cheaper and a more practical one."

According to him, the concept comes from an EVG-3D panel system.

The system is actually being used in the construction of high-rise buildings in first world countries like the United States and has been adopted in the country for five years now.

However, this is the very first time that the system will be applied to the country's new government school buildings.

20 days

In the Bicol Region alone, at least 66 new classrooms will be built in 20 days, to start in the next few days.

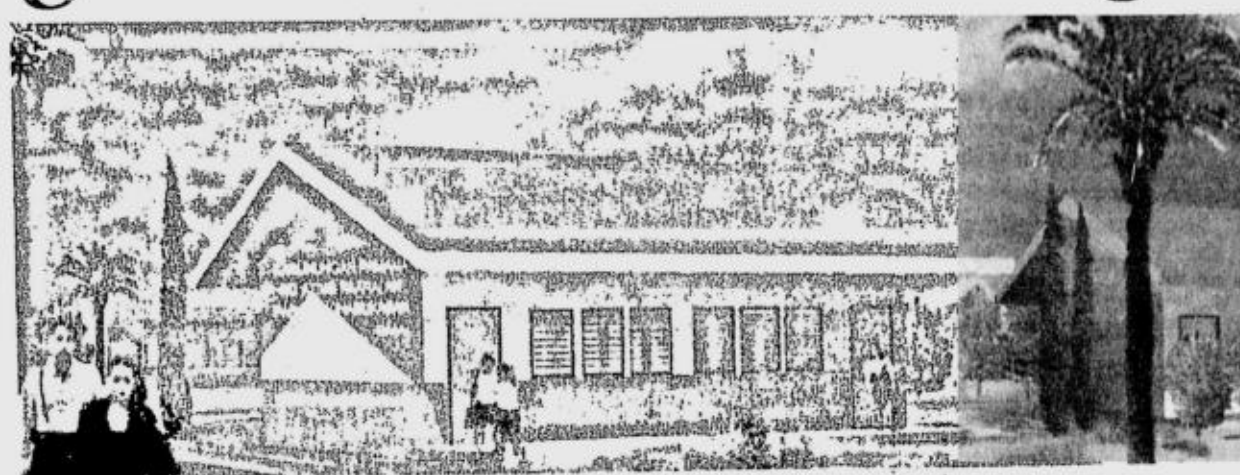
Manalang said that compared to the traditional school buildings whose average construction is done in three months, these new classrooms can be done simultaneously and can be turned over, ready for use, right after 20 days starting from its first day of construction.

"They just have to organize some teams to install the structures, which can be done simultaneously," he said.

Components

The components of these 3D-type classrooms are simple—a core of modified expanded polystyrene (styrofoam) flanked by wire mesh, connected with galvanized truss wires, field-coated with concrete.

"Yet its ordinary design flexibility, ease of installation, versatility of application, and as-



THE ARCHITECT'S perspective of the proposed classroom

The system is actually being used in the construction of high-rise buildings in first world countries like the United States and has been adopted in the country for five years now.

tonishing strength are changing the way construction industry sees the future," Manalang said.

The 3D panel "space frame" is exceptionally rigid and composed of:

- Modified expanded polystyrene core
- Two outer layers of 50 mm x 50 mm wire mesh
- Galvanized truss wires pierced core welded to the outer mesh layers
- Field-applied shotcrete 3D panels that are produced to exact tolerances using patented high-speed machinery.

Advantages

The panel's light weight yields dramatic advantages in lower shipping costs, easy job-site handling and rapid erection or installation.

Practically, according to Manalang, the 3D panel system classroom has a lot of features that make it far better than the traditional ones.

"The traditional construction proved very uncomfortable for the kids and not conducive for learning," he said.

Aside from that, the DPWH official said, the price is cheaper due to its direct system of construction and it can minimize labor and handling fee.

Compared to the traditional building, which amounts to P250,000 or more, this new classroom can be built at only P210,000.

A lot of expenses can be prevented from this system since it does not need engineering supervision and other indirect costs like tax.

It can be built even without using hollow blocks.

"Even the materials and components are easy to transport. And when finished, it is termite-, typhoon- and earthquake-proof. It can stand even an intensity 7 earthquake," Manalang claimed. "No need for ventilation or air-conditioning since it's self-ventilating."

The 3D system actually allows the architect

or engineer to design for various wind loads and seismic conditions.

By varying the size of the wire reinforcement, thickness of shotcrete and incorporating formed-in-place beams and columns,

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most structural requirements can be met.

Manalang added that aside from school buildings, this 3D system they are using could be used in single-story or multistory facilities for curtain, privacy, sound barrier, load bearing, nonload bearing, retaining walls and roofs.

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AVAILABLE THROUGH DEALERS NATIONWIDE

Gov't urged: Go after 'fake titling' judges, registrars of deeds

THE SUPREME Court and the Department of Justice have been asked to crack down on trial judges and registrars of deeds involved in the issuance of fake or spurious land titles.

In a statement, the Greater Malabon Chamber of Commerce Inc. sought the government's all-out assistance in preserving the integrity of the country's Torrens system of land title registration which it said is under siege by unscrupulous elements.

Land titling irregularities

Safeguarding the Torrens system of land titling, chamber president Zac Quintin stressed, "impacts not only on the property rights of individual Filipinos, but likewise, on a much larger scale, on investments and business, and the overall social and economic growth, and national development." Quintin is a past president of the Philippine Association of Real Estate Boards (PAREB), incumbent chair of the Philippine Realtors Foundation and director of the Institute of Philippine Real Estate Consultants.

A large Japanese company withdrew its investments in the Philippines after it was gypped by a land titling syndicate, the SMCCI reported. In Caloocan City, a corporation was swindled of P50 million which it paid for a commercial compound. It was earlier assured by the registrar of deeds of the legitimacy of the title, but it turned out to be fake.

Quintin said land titling irregularities are rampant because of corrupt judges who order equally corrupt registrars of deeds to issue fraudulent land titles to syndicates.

Unconcerned

Government, Quintin lamented, "appears unconcerned, all too complacent, or without the needed political will to exercise its authority in meeting head-on the serious problem."

"This," he pointed, "despite the actual or imminent takeover of large parcels of private and public land by syndicates with their armed goons in the past few years."

Thus, the GMCCI said, the situation raises questions and suspicions that "people in high places, including influential law offices, are in cahoots with syndicates, if they aren't the masterminds themselves."

Members of the judiciary and reg-



QUINTIN

istry of deeds officials, he decried, are increasingly becoming witting instruments of land-grabbing—in the case of judges, by ordering the issuance of bad titles in the name of "justice" without complying with basic land title laws and regulations, and in the case of registrars of deeds, by deliberately issuing the dubious titles under cover of their so-called "ministerial duty."

Frontliners

Registrars of deeds, the GMCCI pointed out, as "the frontliners of the Land Registration Authority in protecting the integrity of the Torrens system of land titling, should be more concerned about the devastating consequences of issuing double or multiple titles to the same parcels of land."

The GMCCI asked: "Why has the registry's vault, the vaulted sacred repository of land titles, been desecrated into being the marketplace of 'saksak-bunot' operators?"

In the case of the Titulo Propriedad titling scandal which broke out in the 1960s, Quintin recalled, it took a brave decent Judge Oscar Fernandez to throw out an order of a predecessor that would have legitimized a dubious title. Judge Carlos Oflada also annulled the sale of a portion of the Titulo territory to a company.

The alleged Spanish land title allegedly covered 173,000 hectares of land in Bulacan, Rizal and Quezon provinces and Quezon and Caloocan Cities.

What is gratifying in the Titulo Propriedad case, Quintin said, was the role played by the Supreme Court and

the Court of Appeals at the time. They protected the Torrens system of titling by affirming lower court orders that annulled, or setting aside as fraudulent those orders that validated clearly dubious titles.

Today, he said, the High Court and the Appellate Court face similar, if not more serious land titling issues in the controversial Maysilo Estate titling cases which the late Chief Justice and Senate President Marcelo B. Fernan once called "the mother of all land titling scams" in this country.

He expressed the hope that as before, the Supreme Court will take a direct and positive step toward ensuring that justice prevails in the massive Maysilo titling irregularities and thus stabilize the Torrens system of land titling in this country. Affected by the fraudulent titles issued and being issued are large portions of Caloocan City and Malabon as well as a portion of Quezon City.

Separate investigations

Earlier conducting separate investigations, the Senate and the Department of Justice had found as fraudulent the titles issued to Jose B. Dimson, Elueteria Rivera, Estelita Hipolito and CLT Realty Corp. The investigation reports recommended to the Office of the Solicitor General: to file cancellation suits against these titles and subsequent issuances to stop further transfers and transactions over them.

Their official reports concluded that then Registrar of Deeds Yolanda O. Alfonso and Deputy Registrar of Deeds Norberto Vasquez Jr. acted maliciously, fraudulently and in bad faith by issuing certifications or statements that OCT No. 994 was issued or registered on April 19, 1917, when they knew the correct date of registration was May 3, 1917. Both were dismissed from their positions.

Because of the fabrication, of an OCT 994 allegedly registered on April 19, 1917, even the Supreme Court was misled into ruling that there were two versions of OCT 994 with reference to the Maysilo Estate, one was issued on April 19, 1917 and another on May 3, 1917. The Court affirmed the validity of the former being the first issued. As a result, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage Authority lost its 2,000-square-meter compound to a claimant.

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Inside design and construction of homes

By Alexis A. Acacio, Ph.D.
(First of two parts)

YOU'VE just bought, inherited, or in whatever way, acquired an empty lot where you'd want your house to be built and where you and your family can spend their lives in. The question is: Will you experiment and build your own house? Or will you entrust it to someone who has plenty of experience in house design and construction?

Listed here are some points of advice that will give you more awareness on how things go about in house building.

Design selection process

Your dream home might follow a specific style—Filipino, Victorian, Mediterranean, Country, Spanish, etc. Yes, you can simply choose a design from any house-building book, which you can get from the nearest bookstore. All the details can be found inside, and all you have to do is choose which suits you best. But is that design suitable for your lot? Are you taking into consideration the safety of its foundation on the soil beneath? Are you capable of modifying the design without risking the integrity of the structure? A standard house design needs to be adapted to the location where it is to be built.

As discussed in the previous article "The professionals in the design of your home," the design of a home involves various professionals who work together in order to deliver to you a safe and beautiful home. Their experience will ensure that you would get the best value for your investment. After all, your house will most probably be one of the biggest investments that you will make.

Professional designers and home-builders provide you with solutions to all these problems. First of all, engineers and architects employ their knowledge, skills and experience in designing the main structure of your house. They are also formally educated and licensed by the government to practice their profession.

Proper planning

Architects, with their knowledge in esthetic design and space planning, envision all possible schemes of houses that can be built on your lot. Experience is an important factor in the success of the design. Good architects make every corner of the house useful and esthetically satisfying with their architectural detailing, and are able to anticipate any future problem the occupants may encounter. They are able to present the details to the constructors clearly, including materials to be used for finishing and furnishing.

Always remember that design revisions are cheapest during the planning stage since all we have to waste are sheets of paper, ink and some of the designer's time. But if revisions are done during construction, one has to demolish materials already in place and the owner would have to incur additional costs for replacement. My advice is that one should spend time in reviewing the design of their home during the design phase. It is wrong and expensive to think that we can easily make revisions during construction.

Use of 3 dimensional models

Many designers these days use computer technology in order to properly visualize how your home will look like after its completion. By developing a 3 dimensional (3D) model, they can see the possible design flaws and correct them prior to construction.

Some 3D models offer a walk through in which one can virtually 'walk through'



3D model of a home

the exterior and interior of the home. This helps the owner visualize better how the house would look like when it is complete. Furniture and fixtures can even be incorporated in these computer-generated models. A 3 dimensional model can also be done by hand.

Not necessarily better

In designing for a reinforced concrete home, it is not simply putting in as many steel bars in concrete as possible, and it's not just "The bigger the structure (footings, beams, columns, etc.), the better." Engineers design these structures such as to have the most economical proportions of materials without compromising the safety of the structure, or the house for this matter. For example, reinforced concrete (RC), which most houses are mainly made of, is a combination of reinforcing steel and concrete. Only a certain amount of steel that is based on engineering calculations should be used.

Otherwise, it may either pose a great risk of what engineers call "brittle failure," where too much steel causes sudden failure of the concrete without any warning, or the steel in the RC may be completely useless that it breaks easily. Remember that steel is much more expensive than cement (or concrete). A good design will not only make your house intact, but will also save you a considerable amount of money.

Computer-aided design

Many design companies use high-technology computer software in calculating all the possible forces the structure will encounter, earthquakes, wind and all, and use them to economically and safely design the components of the structure. The underlying soil is also analyzed in cases where there is risk of ero-



YOUR dream house might follow a specific style

sion, landslide, or any other activity, and the analysis is considered in the design of the foundation and the structure.

The results are interpreted by the engineers and architects, and translate them to drawings that will be used by the builders for construction.

Good design is team effort

After the architect and the structural engineer had finalized the design layout, the other professionals are then called on to join the team. An electrical professional designs the electrical wires, connections and fixtures. These systems are designed in accordance with local codes to eliminate the risks of accidents and fire.

The sanitary engineer designs the plumbing and drainage systems. He recommends to you the various options as to what type of waterline to use, the type and configuration of the drainage system including the type and size of the septic vault to use.

To further beautify the home, the interior designer and the landscape architect

would design various schemes that could suit your tastes, needs and of course budget. They make sure that your home matches your personal tastes and also looks good to others.

Again, the design of a house is not as simple as it looks, various professionals work together toward a house that is well designed and built. The secret to a successful design is a good team of professionals working harmoniously. The experience, insights and ideas from these professionals will make you enjoy your home for many years to come.

When the design is prepared, the next thing to do is to construct the house. This is much more complicated as it sounds. This will be our article for next week.

(Alexis A. Acacio is an associate professor of civil engineering at the University of the Philippines. He is also a marketing and technical consultant to various real estate developers and construction companies. For comments and advice you may reach him at aaacacio@pacific.net.ph or fax to 932-6986.)



A GOOD design needs a good team

DIRETso

The straight way to contemporary living

FOR FILIPINOS, "Diretso" stands for something that is "straight" and "direct." It signifies "focus, honesty and a single definite direction." True to the very sense of the word, Diretso, an outstanding furniture manufacturer, was born.

"We are straight and honest in all aspects," says Mhel Austria, the company's president and a true blue Kapampangan.

"We are very focused when it comes to customer satisfaction." Working alongside Mhel is a team of Dutch nationals who have all found a home in the Philippines, particularly in Pampanga—the place famous for first-rate hand craftsmen and the country's recognized "furniture capital."

Straight, pure, natural

"Our product designs and workmanship are straight, pure and natural," says Diretso's marketing manager Jan Krenn. "They are classy but minus the frills and superfluties. Nothing is overdone," interrupts designer Frank Van der Walle. In other words, "Simple lang!" they chorus in a delightful Dutch-Filipino accent.

Diretso is a world-class company specializing in the design and production of medium and high-end furniture made from indigenous and imported materials, the result of which is a unique blend of quality crafts and top-caliber products. Starting out as a trading company, its main job was limited to designing, sourcing out furniture materials and

joining trade fair exhibitions. In 1996, Ad Colle and Ton Van Hierden founded Diretso and with the indisputable Filipino team, Diretso emerged, giving new dimension to furniture design and production.

Recognized as Best Product Design, Best Product Collection and Best Visual Design at the annual Philippine International Furniture Show, Diretso has been a forerunner in the development of innovative and cutting-edge home and office furnishings that are credited to suit the discriminative style and taste of the global market.

Undaunted

The Dutch team behind Diretso remains undaunted despite threats of economic crisis and insurgency in the country. And contrary to the notion that Filipino labor is cheap that's why investors choose the country before anything, Frank counteracts: "Definitely not! Filipino labor costs twice as much as compared with other Asian countries."

But that's not the whole package, they say: "It's the skillfulness, genius and dedication of every Filipino worker that keeps us here." Giving glory back where it's due, the Diretso team donated at least 2 percent of this year's earnings to Munting Paraiso—a haven for impoverished cancer stricken children at the Philippine General Hospital—last Christmas.

Newest display area

While its main showroom sits on a 110,000-square-foot lot in San Fernando, Pampanga, Diretso now boasts of its newest display area at LRI Building on N. Garcia Street (formerly Reposo) in Makati where one can see for themselves its wide range of products. Paintings from The Drawing Room and classic metal works from Silver Lining adorn the display of classy sofas, club chairs, dining and bedroom furniture at the showroom. "Other manufacturers can copy our design but they can't copy quality," Jan beams of Diretso's uniqueness.

Diretso's competitive advantage lies in the verity that local materials such as abaca, banana, wicker, malakka and metal are combined with leather, fabric and other materials from all over Europe and the world to create top-of-the-line furniture products. Each furniture is a impeccable fusion of Filipino flair and European design—a clear convergence of two powerful cultures.

"More shops!" the Diretso group says in unison when asked of immediate future plans. Definitely, for a team that continually endeavors to serve and satisfy the ever-demanding furniture market with no less than world-class masterpieces, they are well on their way there. And there's no stopping them because that's the only way to go straight up! As we know it in Filipino, its...Diretso!



TOP REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER

Housing developer Empire East Land Holdings Inc. was honored as the top real estate developer for 2002 by the Who's Who in the Philippines Awards and the National Consumer Affairs Foundation (NCAF) during the 19th annual Year-ender Consumers Excellence Awards held recently at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City. Empire East Land assistant vice president for project management Eric de Guzman (third from left) is shown receiving the award from NCAF founding president Jonathan Navea, research and nomination head Lolita Mirpuri and awards chair Justo Ortiz.

A fresh look at Lakeside Farm houses on stilts

If you love the casual sophistication of fine contemporary and intrigued by the romantic aura of the exotic Southeast ancient homes, then Rambutan Villa is your home.

Inspired by the 16th century dwellings, international designer Ernest Santiago recreated the "Bahay Kubo" into an architecture that is both tropical and urban. There are many charms of the "bahay kubo", but the one that stands out is that the indoors and outdoors flow into each other.

Lanai

A case in point is the Lanai that serves as the living room as well as the dining area with only the house posts and the Vigan tiles separating you from the outside. The picturesque vista of the verdant hills and the glorious mountains view of Lakeside Farms serve like live paintings in your living room and dining area.

Cooking is done in a kitchen hidden in one corner of the lanai, where the smoke and the aroma of food cooking can escape.

Public and private rooms form a continuous whole on the second floor. Huge and roomy, it was where storage, rest, work and other activities used to take place in the olden days, now it serves as a refreshing oasis to rest and sleep. The bathroom on the second floor is built to take long luxurious baths.

Verandas

There are verandas to gaze at the moon and the stars at the night and large picturesque windows capture the ever-changing colors of the view of the beautiful Lakeside Farms.

From the ancient structure of the house to the practical additions to the houses on stilts, this is contemporary from a fresh, refreshing point of view.



UNION CEMENT CENTER

Union Cement Corp. recently opened its 9th center through Alice Merchandising. Gracing the outlet opening are, from left, Alice Bautista, DILG city director Filemon Vinluan and Dr. Francis Felizardo, UCC senior vice president—Sales, Marketing and Distribution.



People, Events & Products

Aries Espinosa, Editor

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PhilHealth president named Philssa chair

THE PHILIPPINE Social Security Association (Philssa) elected Dr. Francisco T. Duque, president and CEO of the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) as chair of its executive board from Jan. 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004.

In its recent meeting held in Makati City, the Philssa Board unanimously decided to commence Dr. Duque's term as chair this month instead of from July 1 this year to June 30 next year.

Lawyer Romero S. Quimbo, acting president and CEO of the Home Development Mutual fund (HDMF) said this move is being taken "...not out of convenience but in confidence and belief in the PhilHealth president's capabilities" to steer the organization and achieve its goals.

"I am honored to be elected chair of this organization. The challenge here is for us to ensure that each and every Filipino has social security protection especially when he is out of work," Duque said.

Philssa is an association of institutions performing social security and related functions. Among its members are PhilHealth, HDMF, Social Security System (SSS), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Armed Forces of the Philippines - Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFPRSBS) and the Employees Compensation Commission (ECC).

Its primary goal is to achieve a happy and satisfied workforce enjoying total social security protection of the Philippine government. "We hope to establish

a rational and well-coordinated social protection program that will provide all workers and their families with responsive benefits that they and their employers can afford and which are doable by the government," Duque stressed.

As Philssa chair, Duque said his priority areas this year are fraud control, membership development, legislative support, quality assurance and media relations.

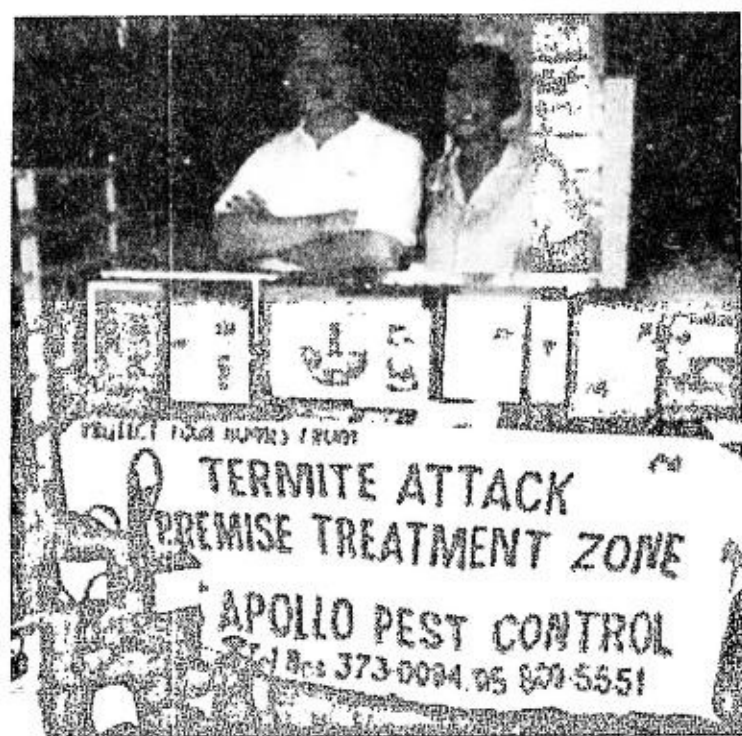
Other officers of the Philssa executive board are Elmor Juridico, ECC executive director as vice chair, lawyer Winston Garcia, GSIS president and general manager as treasurer and Corazon de la Paz, SSS president and CEO, lawyer Quimbo and Cesar Jaime Jr., AFPRSBS president as members.



GOOD HARVEST ORCHARDS-BAGAC BATAAN MOA SIGNED

Good Harvest Orchards and Marketing Corporation and the Municipality of Bagac, Bataan headed by its Mayor, Norberto Ricardo recently entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the development of 1,000 hectares of land in Bagac, Bataan into a mango orchard of Good Harvest. The mango orchard development is keeping up with the innovative marketing and business concept of the company, enabling any individuals to partake in the lucrative mango farming/exporting

business. Through the forged partnership, Bagac, Bataan will benefit from the orchard development's downstream businesses as well as creating jobs and livelihood to the town's constituents. The MOA signing was held in SBMA recently and with Vice Mayor Jose Bantugan, representing Bagac, Bataan and Ralph Lopez for Good Harvest Orchards. Harvest, together with Nick Ancheta, municipal administrator; and Councilors Jimmy Dizon, Amando Fajardo Jr. and others.



BAYER'S PREMISE SC AND APOLLO PEST CONTROL WORK TOGETHER

Apollo Pest Control, an accredited pest control operator for Bayer's Premise SC, recently participated in the Ayala Alabang Garden Club Bazaar at Ayala Alabang Village. Shown above are the general manager of Apollo Pest Control, Mr. Tony Santos, and daughter Beverly. Premise SC is a breakthrough termiteicide manufactured by Bayer which kills all kinds of termites. Unlike other termiteicides, Premise SC works with nature through naturally occurring soil fungi which facilitates termite colony suppression.



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Photo shows a student of St. Jude College using the newly installed ID swiping system at the entrance of the school's main building, just one of the technological innovations recently employed by the school to improve security and enhance network connection. Upgrading its computer network's backbone to fiber-optics and using satellite technology, the college now virtually connects all its departments and its two distant campuses, resulting to faster access and exchange of information. St. Jude also purchased new Pentium 4 equipped computers with Microsoft XP as operating system to beef up its IT laboratories and allow students easier access to their free e-mail accounts through the newly launched SJC Webmail. St. Jude College has campuses in Sampaloc, Manila and Dasmariñas, Cavite.



ARIEL IS SHARP'S CHOICE

For the third year, Sharp Philippines Corporation, one of the country's leading manufacturers of home appliances, has chosen Ariel as the best laundry detergent for its washing machines. Ariel superior cleaning and stain removal system which delivers one of the best possible cleaning results, makes it Sharp's top choice. A free Ariel laundry gift pack comes with every purchase of a Sharp washing machine. Sealing the agreement with a handshake are Asia Yap, marketing alliances manager of Procter & Gamble, makers of Ariel, and Koji Domoto, assistant vice president and division general manager, domestic sales of Sharp Philippines Corporation.

Product FILES

Feel the Freixenet Magic Moment

A GREAT gift idea for any occasion from Freixenet (Frey-she-net) Sparkling Wines, the award-winning and world-renowned sparkling wine from Spain. Freixenet introduces the Freixenet Magic Moment Pack. Each pack contains a bottle of Freixenet and two imported flute glasses, one red candle and one crystal candle holder. Freixenet Magic Moment comes in two variants: Cordon Negro and Carta Nevada.

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Freixenet Sparkling Wines, the sparkling taste of memorable celebrations and the number one selling brand of sparkling wines in the world, are exclusively marketed and distributed in the Philippines by ADP Industries Corporation. For inquiry call Freixenet hotline at 921-2121.



New learning gadget by Barbie

WELCOME the latest learning gadget from Barbie, the Learn with Me Laptop Computer.

Girls can have fun while learning with hi-tech interactive play. This gadget has 3 cool quiz modes with the voice of Barbie, music, sound effects and light. It teaches letters, numbers, seasons and more with real cool sounds.



It has a real working keyboard with easy-press-buttons and its own mouse. There's hip music and exciting lights that add fun and ease of learning.

Barbie Learn with Me Laptop Computer and other Barbie gadgets and accessories are now available in all leading toy stores and department stores nationwide. Exclusively distributed by Richwell Trading Corporation, #25 Quezon Ave., QC.

1st National Conference of retired RTC judges slated today

THE FIRST National Conference of RTC Judges of the Philippines will be held today, at the Century Park Hotel, Malate Manila, from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The objective of the conference is to secure an amendment of RA 910 and RA 1797 from Congress and Senate affecting the monthly pension/annuity of RTC judges, survivorship and other benefits.

Guest speakers are Sen. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Senate Judiciary Committee chair; Cong. Marcelino Libanan, chair of the Judiciary Committee, House of Representatives; and former secretary of Deeds, Senator Raul Roco. The conference will have free food and drinks.



LA MIRANDA ROYALE GROUND BREAKING RITES

Sta. Lucia Realty and Development Inc. and marketing network firm Royale Homes Marketing Corporation held the groundbreaking ceremonies for La Miranda Royale Commercial and Residential Estates in Plaridel, Bulacan. La Miranda is the latest addition to Sta. Lucia Realty's prime property listing to dot the Bulacan landscape. Ceremonies were led by RHMC's EVP for sales and marketing Ma. Carmina Sotto; EVP for

administration and finance Ma. Mayleen Bernardino; Municipality of Bulacan Councilor Lorie Vinta and Councilor Pablo Marquez; RHMC president Matilde Robles; Plaridel, Bulacan Mayor Jaime Vistan; Exan Builders Corp. Tonet Robles; Plaridel, Bulacan Councilor Paulino Bel; Sta. Lucia VP for sale Marlissa Tan. For inquiries, call Royale Homes at (02) 726-4205, (02) 726-4288 or (044) 795-2933.

Get back to Slimmers World Greenhills which is back in shape

TO EVERYONE who is determined to stick to their New Year's resolutions to get fit, get healthy and get sexy - Slimmers World International Greenhills center is one with them in getting back in shape. Not only are their operations full-blast from 6:30 a.m. till 9 p.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m. till 7 p.m. on Saturdays, but their time-tested, client-proven program and spa services have been more personalized to meet your own unique goals for the new year. These new programs are being offered for this month at low promotional-prices such as on the partial-monthly packages, the popular Annual Keep Fit and Annual Exclusive Greenhills programs.

Gold and Exclusive Greenhills lifetime membership and the much sought-after Biodynamics which has helped thousands of happy gym-goers lose unwanted weight and excess body fat permanently.

Call Annalyn now at 726-6505 / 0918 -9203392 or better yet visit them at the 27th floor of the Atlanta Center Condominium, along Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan. Look for Liz, August or Tere or Josie and avail of a free figure consultation with a body fat analysis and even a free trial gym work-out. Who knows, even before summer comes around, you just might get that new body that you've wanted for yourself.



BIG PRIZES AT STAKE IN SUNSILK'S RAFFLE PROMO

Sun Silk Black has just given away 2 million (tax free) in Eat Bulaga's "Sun Silk Black's Dito Nagkatalo, Korek Ka Dyan" raffle promo last Dec. 28. The lucky studio winner Bernadette Noa, and her homepartner, from Davao Del Sur, Jenipher Nazareth each won 1 million. On Jan. 4, 11, and 18, P100,000 is at stake for each studio winners and their homepartners. While on Jan. 25, another studio winner and her homepartner will get the chance to win 1 million in the monthly game. Let Sun Silk Black make you a millionaire this new year. Join Eat Bulaga's "Sun Silk Black's Dito Nagkatalo, Korek Ka Dyan" raffle promo now. See posters for more details.

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OBITUARIES

In loving memory of our beloved Mother

MARINA MERCADO HOJAS**Vda. De BACULIO**(wife of Former City Mayor of Cagayan de Oro City, Former Governor and Congressman of Misamis Oriental, **Pedro Baculio**)

Peacefully left us to rest in the loving embrace of our Lord on January 8, 2003, 4:00 p.m. at the age of 87.

Her loving sister Andrea Borromeo; children Mayor Emelita B. Almirante, Congressman Augusto Baculio, Sylvia B. Cajanding, Antonio, Veronica and Pedrito Baculio; in-laws Carlos, Estrella, Fely and Jane; grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for her eternal repose.

Vigil is at Villa Ria, Cugman, Cagayan de Oro City.

Interment will be on Friday, January 17, 2003 at 10:00 a.m. at El Salvador Cemetery, El Salvador, Misamis Oriental.

AURORA F. PABLO-GIMENEZ

(Widow of the late Col. Asiselo R. Gimenez)

Now peacefully rests in the bosom of the Lord on January 12, 2003 at the age of 72.

Her children Joselito, Julieta, Jaime, Jennifer (†), Jessie John and Joy Antonette; her in-laws Linda Badoy and Emie Baña; grandchildren, brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces and other in-laws request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City. She will be cremated on Thursday, 16 January 2003 at the Paz Crematorium after the Holy Mass at 1:00 p.m.

Venancio (Vhennie Otoy) Elmido Dasugo

April 1, 1963 – January 12, 2003

His bereaved mother Maria; sisters Melba, Marilyn, Elizabeth and Brigid; brothers-in-law, nieces, nephews and relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Veronica Memorial Chapel, Libertad, Pasay City.

Interment will be on Saturday, 18 January 2003 after the Holy Mass at Lobo, Batangas.

**Whoever finds his life
will lose it,
and whoever loses
his life for
my sake will find it.**

Matthew 10:39

VICTOR UANG LIONG

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on January 10, 2003 at the age of 64.

His bereaved wife Rosario; children Debbie, Diane & Wilbert Go, and Steven; brother Ricardo and Mary; nieces & nephew Emily and George Tipoe, Eleanore & Craig Simpson; Michael & Doxa, Elaine & Rick Averitt and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. There will be a Mass at 8:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 16, 2003. Cremation will follow.

CONRADO BASACA LAUREL

of Cabuyao, Laguna

Died in the Grace of our Lord on January 13, 2003 at the age of 57.

Beloved son to Herminio (†) and Consuelo (†); *Kuya Dado* to Ningle, Ostic and Nanette, Engging and Junior, Wendell and Owen; *Papa Dado* to Kaye, Vanny and Enzo; Toktok and Rommel, Francis, Ernest, Chico and Nikki; Charizze, Madel and Eric; and JayJay;Teacher, "father" and friend to many;
He will be deeply missed.

His remains lie in state at the family residence on J.P. Rizal, Cabuyao, Laguna.

Interment will be on Thursday, January 16, 2003 at the Cabuyao Municipal Cemetery after the 1:30 p.m. Mass at the St. Polycarp Church.

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DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT**Jose Ramon Ruiz Llamas**

June 7, 1976 – January 10, 2003

His bereaved parents, Ramon and Marilou; brothers Raffy and Mon; grandmother Mercedes; girlfriend Sid.

Aunts, uncles cousins, nephews and nieces request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus Liguori Chapel, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

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LIFESTYLE



ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Weight loss (and gain) lessons from sumo wrestlers

SUMO wrestlers are, hands down, the world's foremost experts at gaining weight. True, there are many other people who are obese but rarely do they gain weight on purpose. In fact, many of them are constantly trying to lose weight. Sumo wrestlers are different.

Their unique lifestyle is primarily devoted to one thing—gaining as much weight as they can. They do this because sumo wrestling has no weight divisions. So a 200-pound wrestler can compete with a 400-pounder. The object of the game is to make some part of the opponent's body touch the floor or to push him out of the inner circle of the ring. Speed, agility and special sumo wrestling techniques contribute to winning but the heavier wrestler usually has the upper hand.

Ideally, sumo wrestlers should gain muscle mass in proportion with fat to maintain their strength while increasing fat around the abdomen and hips. This lowers their center of gravity and makes it harder to push them out of balance. The fat also serves as padding against blows they receive and it cushions their body when they fall. However, in the sumo world, weight is weight. The heavier and fatter wrestler, no matter how clumsy and slow, usually has an edge over a more agile but lighter competitor.

If you are the type who has a hard time gaining weight, sumo wrestlers can definitely teach you a thing or two. Considering that the Japanese, as a race, are not prone to overweight, the fact that sumo wrestlers are wildly successful at their goal tells you that they've gotten the process down pat.

And if you want to lose weight, you can also learn from them what not to do. It's sort of like how your mother always holds up some black sheep relative as the role model you should not emulate unless you want to ruin your life.

Genetics plays a role in how easily you lose or gain weight.

So how do slim young Japanese males become 400-plus or even 500-plus pound heavyweights? For starters, wrestling scouts look for boys who are athletic (preferably with experience in the martial arts) and stocky in build, with bodies that are big-boned and capable of putting on weight easily. They don't take unfit and overweight youngsters because the scouts believe they don't have what it takes, physically or mentally, to endure the rigorous training and lifestyle a sumo wrestler undergoes.

Hawaiians of Polynesian or Samoan descent have found success and popularity in sumo wrestling partly because they are physically built for the sport. They have big frames, heavy bones, and they put on weight effortlessly. It usually takes 10 years for a Japanese sumo wrestler to reach fighting weight. It takes much less for his Hawaiian counterpart. Wrestlers weigh about 200 pounds when they start but grow to 300 to 400 pounds when they get to the top division. Konishiki, a native Hawaiian past grand champion, weighed 600 plus!

The lesson here is that genetics plays a role in how easily you lose or gain weight. You are not doomed by your genes to be fat even if you come from a family that gains weight easily but you have to accept that you will have to work hard at controlling your weight.

Lifestyle for gaining weight

Unless he is competing in a tournament, a sumo wrestler's day goes something like this: He wakes up at 6 a.m., trains hard for four to five hours on an empty stomach, takes a relaxing hot bath, eats his first meal of the day, takes a nap for three to four hours, does his personal errands, eats his second and final meal, and retires for the night.

In short, a sumo wrestler's lifestyle is composed of three things: training, eating and sleeping. Wrestlers live together in "stables" or training schools where their training, diet, and sleeping regimens are strictly watched and implemented.

The traditional sumo wrestling formula for gaining weight is a result of many years of experience in fattening up 165 pound (the minimum weight of aspiring sumo wrestlers who join a stable) young Japanese males into 400-pound behemoths.

No breakfast

I don't think sumo coaches of centuries ago

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan



knew that people who don't eat breakfast tend to gain more weight than people who do. This traditional rule probably developed for the practical reason that you can't do vigorous training and exercise on a full stomach. Still, the practice suits their purposes very well. By skipping breakfast and exercising strenuously for a few hours, the wrestlers are so hungry by

noon that they are ravenous.

This is also what happens to average people who don't eat breakfast. They lose control of their appetites at lunch because their last meal was dinner the night before.

Weight loss experts say that one characteristic common to overweight people is that they seldom eat breakfast. Not only does skipping breakfast trigger overeating later in the day but it can also cause a five-percent drop in metabolism.

The lesson here is that if you want to lose weight, eat breakfast. You are not saving on any calories by skipping the first meal of the day since you will just eat double at lunch. If you want to gain weight, I would still suggest

WEIGHT/C2

January 16 (Thursday) 9 - 12 nn CHINESE COOKING 1 Chicken Velouté and Sweet Corn Soup, Lemon Chicken, Fried Crab in Black Bean Sauce, Char Siu (Barbecue Pork), Shu Mai, Almond Jelly P 650

January 18 (Saturday) 9 am - 1 pm BASIC BAKING 1 A HANDS ON experience for students to learn the basics of baking from the proper way of measuring ingredients to the presentation of the finished product: Chiffon Cake, Coffee Crunch Cake, Sponge Cake, Strawberry and White Chocolate Trifle, Rich Butter Cake, Pie Crust: American Apple Pie P 1,200

January 19, January 25 and February 1, (3 Saturdays) 2 - 5 pm EVERYDAY COOKING (featuring well-loved Filipino and Continental Dishes for the beginner)
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January 20, (Monday) 9 - 12 nn INDIAN COOKING Homemade Yoghurt, Curried Chicken with Cashews, Keema Matar (Minced Meat), Lamb Curry, Gulab Jamun (dessert), Lassi (Yoghurt drink) P 900

January 22, (Wednesday) 9 am - 1 pm CHINESE COOKING 2 Fried Chicken, Szechuan Style, Bean Curd in Crab Sauce, Peking Duck (simplified version), Mandarin Pancakes, Deep Fried Sweet Wonton P 1,200

January 25, (Saturday) 9 am - 1 pm BASIC BAKING 2 Baking with Frostings and Icings: Brownie Cake with Chocolate Sour Cream Frosting, Apple Walnut Cake with Creamy Caramel Frosting, Chocolate Decadent Cake with Chocolate Fudge Icing and Caramel Sauce, Maple Walnut Cake with Fluffy White Frosting P 1,200

January 27, 28, 29 (Mon, Tues, Wed.) 10 am - 3 pm THE MAKING OF A FONDANT

February 1, (Saturday) 9 - 12 nn THAI COOKING Tom Yum Goong, Phad Thai, Bagong Rice, Green Mango Salad, Herbed Steamed Mussels, Poh Pahn (Thai Springrolls) Mango and Sticky Rice P 900

February 1, (Sat.) 2 - 5 pm SPANISH COOKING Roast Suckling Pig, Croquetas de Jamon, Caldo Gallego (Spanish Stew), Arroz con Pollo, Spanish Navia P 1,200

February 3, (Monday) 9 - 12 nn PASTAS AND MORE! Learn how to make Homemade Pasta, Basic Tomato Sauce, Linguini Carbonara, Spaghetti Putanesca, Lasagne, Seafood Pasta, Penne alla Vodka P 900

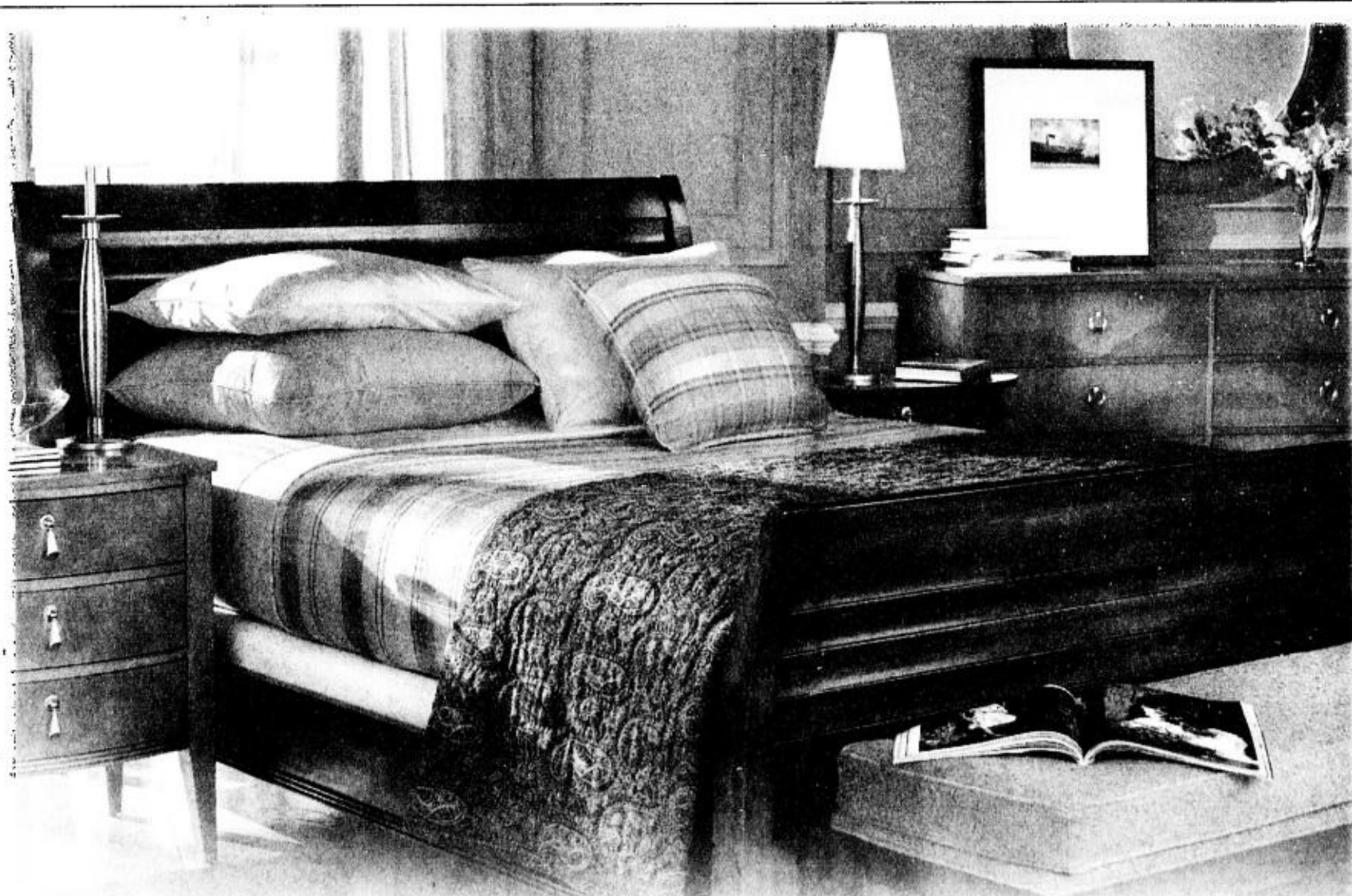
February 4, (Tuesday) 9 - 12 nn ASIAN COOKING 1 Homemade Chicken Rice, Vietnamese Spring Rolls, Spicy Kangkong, Chili Crab, Claypot Chicken Rice, Peking Candied Apples P 1,200

February 5, (Wednesday) 9 - 12 nn ASIAN COOKING 2 Chicken and Beef Satay, Beef Rendang, Otak Otak (Fish Cake), Assam Babi Goreng (Fried Tamannat Pork Ball), Gado Gado, Pisang Goreng P 1,200

February 8, (Saturday) 9 - 12 nn BROWNIES GALORE Chocolate Cheesecake Brownies, Cappuccino Brownies, Kahlua Brownies, Chocolate Fudge Brownies, White Chocolate Pecan Brownies P 1,200

February 10, (Monday) 9 - 12 nn VALENTINE DINNER Pasta with Gorgonzola Sauce, Paella Valenciana, Fish Florentine in Feta Pastry, Bone Marrow Canapes, Crepes Samurais P 1,000

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For weight gainers, you can still exercise and gain strength and endurance while putting on weight

Weight loss (and gain) lessons from sumo wrestlers

From page C1

eating a little something since research indicates that not eating breakfast negatively affects your mental performance in the morning.

Two big meals a day

To gain all that weight, you would think that sumo wrestlers would be eating all day long. Actually, they eat only twice a day but their meals are gigantic, equivalent to five to 10 meals for a regular person. There is scientific evidence to validate this practice. Research indicates that eating one or two big meals a day makes your body more prone to hoarding fat compared to eating five or six small meals a day.

No one is born with the ability to eat that much food in one sitting so sumo wrestlers have to progressively train their stomachs to stretch and accommodate larger volumes. They even have special massages to move the intestines around to enable them to consume more food.

In other words, if you want to control your weight, stay away from those large American-size servings. You may be shocked initially at how big they are but eventually, your eyes and your stomach will get used to them. If you are trying to gain weight and you have a small appetite, there is hope. Slowly but surely, increase the amount of food you eat and your stomach will cooperate. Here is another lesson from sumo wrestlers—they force themselves to continue eating even when they are full. Like I said, if you are not genetically prone to gaining weight, you have to sacrifice and work at it.

are necessary for muscles to grow. Body builders know that it is during sleep and rest time that muscles are repaired and new protein is synthesized to add to the muscle size.

The weight loss lesson is that you want to stay as physically active as you can throughout the day to burn off calories. The weight gain lesson is the pounds won't stick to you if you are like a whirling dervish all day.

You can still gain weight in spite of vigorous exercise.

In spite of their bulk, sumo wrestlers are remarkably strong and flexible. Konishiki could reportedly finish 70 pieces of sushi and 100 bottles of beer in one sitting but he could also dance the night away and so supple that he could do splits.

Sumo wrestlers might look like big obese babies in "diapers" but they train as hard as any other athlete. Their daily four to five-hour exercise regimen includes repeatedly hitting a piece of wood with their bare hands, 500-plus leg lifts, and other equally strenuous routines as well as practice spars with each other. All that exercise burns a large amount of calories and that's why they have to eat so much. They have to be able to put on weight in spite of their grueling training program.

The lesson for weight watchers is that no amount of exercise will make you lose weight if you eat more than you burn. This is an important lesson because it is one of the top mistakes people make regarding diet and exercise. For weight gainers, the lesson is that you can still exercise and gain strength and endurance while putting on weight. Just make sure to eat more calories than you use up in your exercise routine.

Weight-related health problems

Sumo wrestlers are treated like movie stars in Japan and can earn considerably more than the average Japanese male but there is a price to pay for their fame and glory. Their average life expectancy is 65 years, which is 10 years younger than other Japanese men. Many sumo wrestlers lose weight when they retire (it takes them three to four years to go back to a normal weight) but by that time they have permanent joint damage to their ankles, knees and hips. Others are sidelined by joint injuries and conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes, which make them bow out of the sport at the height of their careers.

The lesson for everyone is that there are a host of health problems that are directly related to being overweight and that's why it is so important to maintain a normal weight for your height and build.

Watch "In Fitness & In Health" Mondays to Fridays on Studio 23 (Channel 23) at 6-6:30 a.m., and on Net25 (Channel 62) at 6-6:30 p.m.

For questions and past articles and exercises, go to www.tinajuanfitness.com.

Questions on Women's Health: YOUR DOCTOR KNOWS BEST

Q: There are many feminine hygiene products in the market. How do I know which is the best for me?

A: First things first. Our body is already equipped with ways of protecting itself. For example, a woman's body naturally produces Lactic Acid. What this Lactic Acid does is lower the pH level inside the vagina, around 3.8-4.2, to make it more acidic. This level of acidity inhibits the growth of harmful bacteria and thus protects the vagina.

However, because of our active lifestyle—wearing tight fitting jeans, using nylon underwear, t-back and girdles, having more than one sexual partner, and stress—we become susceptible to vaginal infection.

So a little help will not go amiss, but we should be very selective. The best product is always the one that contains the same element your body already produces. Hence, read the labels carefully.

Using the wrong product, like soap or other feminine wash, for your feminine hygiene can do more harm than good. Remember, your genital area is so sensitive and needs something that will not upset its natural protective elements. Because when that happens, you may experience itching, irritation, and possibly infection.

Always pick the ones approved and trusted by doctors. Listen to them. They are the experts in these things. Sometimes advertisers do not tell you the whole truth to suit their purpose. An endorsement by doctors lessens your chances of being deceived. For example, some products claim that your external genitalia's pH is around 5. This is not entirely true. Your external genitalia is made up of several parts—and not only skin. And only the outermost, which is skin, has the pH level of 5. What they do not tell you is that the pH level becomes more acidic as it nears your internal genitalia.

Most importantly, when you feel something different, consult your doctor immediately. They are the best people to advise you.

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Take Charge Doc! NICKY S. MONTAÑA, M.D.

Looking to learn more about your benefits under your MEDICard coverage? Do you want to be clear on the procedures, which allow you to avail of MEDICard's services? Get your information straight from MEDICard's Medical Director, DR. NICKY S. MONTAÑA.

FAQs (frequently asked questions)

My family has been enrolled under MEDICard for a long time now. My son's membership will be expiring soon, as he will be turning 22 years old within two months time. Is there a way for him to continue his MEDICard membership even if he has reached the exit age?

Yes, there is. At least two weeks prior to your son's card expiry, inform MEDICard in writing of your intention to continue his HMO program. He may renew his policy, not anymore as your dependent, but rather as a principal member. His "renewal" must be accomplished within a prescribed duration for your son to enjoy his original policy effectivity. Otherwise, he will be given a new effectivity date based on the day he has settled his membership premium. The membership rates may vary subject to the room and board type chosen.

Meet your MEDICard Team



Dr. Alan Paul I. Olavere is MEDICard's accredited specialist at Medical City General Hospital (MCGH) in Mandaluyong. Dr. Olavere is an Internist. He finished his degree in Medicine at the University of Santo Tomas and took his residency training for his specialization at MCGH. He also subspecializes in Medical Oncology, finishing his residency at UP-PGH. Doc Alan is a Fellow to the Philippine Society of Medical Oncology, and the Philippine College of Physicians. He spends most of his free time reading, playing billiards and watching movies. For consultations, you may visit him at his clinic, Room 501 of the Medico Bldg. from Mondays to Fridays, 3 PM to 6 in the evening.



After finishing her studies in Medicine at Manila Central University, **Dr. Araceli L. Barrientos** chose to specialize in Pediatrics at Medical City General Hospital. She then took up subspecialization training in Pediatric Infectious Diseases, finishing her residency in 1998. Today, now married with four children, she is based in World Citi Medical Center where members may seek her services. For consultations, you may visit Doc Araceli's clinic at Room 210, Mondays to Saturdays from 9 AM to 12 noon.



At the Dipolog Medical Center in Sta. Filomena, Dipolog City, Zamboanga Del Norte, members may seek the services of MEDICard accredited specialist, **Dr. Serafin G. Uy**. Doc Jing is an orthopedic surgeon who joined MEDICard in 1997. He has special interest in tennis, bowling and billiards and is a fishing aficionado. Members may visit him for their consultation needs from Mondays to Fridays, 10 AM to 5 in the afternoon.

We encourage all MEDICard members to voice out their concerns and issues at hand. **BE HEARD AND BE READ.** You can write DR. NICKY S. MONTAÑA at 9/F Sagittarius Bldg. H.V. De la Costa St., Salcedo Village, Makati City or e-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com. For feedback on avallment of our services, e-mail us at feedback@medicardphils.com.

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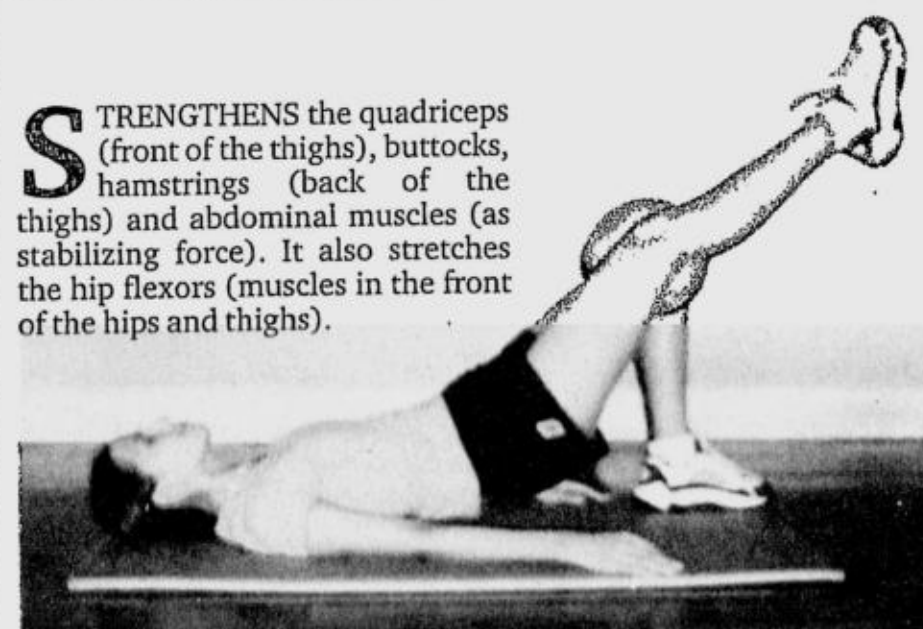
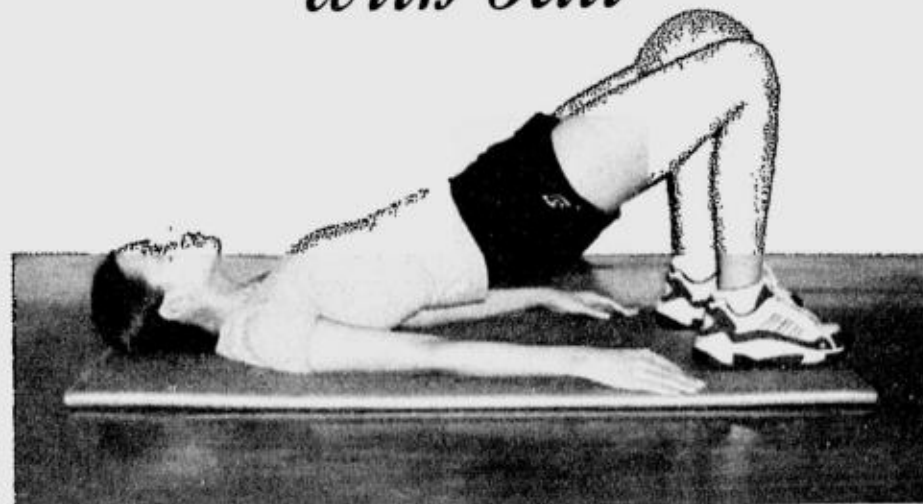
TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com.

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.



EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Alternating leg bridge with ball



Equipment
Exercise mat and plastic or rubber ball

Exercise technique
1. Lie down with the ball between your bent knees and arms beside your hips.
2. Press down on the mat with your heels and lift your pelvis up.
3. While keeping your pelvis lifted, alternately straighten and bend your right and left leg.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions then lower your pelvis to the mat.

Performance tips
1. Keep your hipbones level with each other as you alternately straighten and bend your right and left leg.
2. Press your knees together to keep the ball in place as you move your legs.
3. Exhale as you straighten the legs and inhale as you put your feet down on the mat.

Repetitions
One repetition equals the right and left leg straightening and bending. Do 10 repetitions.

Unseen factors to consider in real estate investment

WHAT are the factors that you should consider before buying or renting real estate? The material aspects are obviously important, like cost, location, construction, safety, security, water and power, etc. Recently, even feng shui or the effects of yin and yang energies have come into play and some real estate companies have engaged the services of feng shui experts to give advice on these aspects. This is well and good.

However, this is not enough. There are hidden and unseen factors that must also be considered before buying real estate or moving to a new house. These factors are usually ignored, with very unfortunate consequences for some.

Let me give you some actual examples to illustrate my point. A large multinational company transferred its headquarters to a corner lot in a busy commercial part of Makati. Almost immediately after making that move, sales dropped. At first, management did not see any connection between the new place and the negative sales figures because of the economic downturn.

Then certain eerie things began to happen in the offices. Toilets would flush, strange noises were heard, ethereal creatures were seen at night by employees working overtime, typewriters would be working (there were no personal computers at the time), and a bad smell, the source of which was not known, would spread. The last straw was when the president of the company entered the boardroom one morning when nobody was around yet. He actually saw one chair flying in the air, as if somebody had flung it!

Full of spirits

That was when I was asked to take a look at the place. I brought along a clairvoyant friend who can see unseen spirits. He confirmed what I thought was happening. The whole place was teeming with all sorts of spirits—both spirits of the dead and elementals or nature spirits. Worse, he discovered that the back of the building, where there was a garden, had an entire community of nature spirits and there was an entrance to their kingdom right there. The spirits wouldn't leave the place and would continue to bother whoever occupied the building.

I advised the company to leave the place at once, but the comptroller objected because they still had three months on their lease contract. I told them it's their decision. A day after we left, the comptroller called me and said, "Four years at the Ateneo and the Jesuit priests couldn't convince me of anything like that. You stayed here only for 30 minutes and I was convinced!"

After they moved, I heard sales went up, employees felt relieved and happy and there was greater harmony among them.

Here's another example. Several years ago, a former officemate called because he and his wife were thinking of buying a house and lot owned by a doctor in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa. Gabby and his wife liked the property very much. It had a big yard and beautiful swimming pool. The owners were selling the property very cheaply because they said they were migrating to the United States as all their children were already there.

Gabby wanted to be sure the property was free of any negative entities before they bought it. I went there and the owner showed us around the place. I told Gabby I didn't feel the presence of any earthbound spirit or elemental, but I sensed something heavy and negative. I couldn't determine where it was coming from. I was sure the house itself was free of supernatural intrusions.

Then I went outside and stood in front of the house. It was then I noticed an abandoned, dilapidated two-story concrete house to the left of the property. I at once realized the negative energy was coming from the neighboring house. I asked whose house it was. I was told it was owned by a drug pusher who was caught by the police. The house had been empty for four years!

I told Gabby the house and lot he intended to buy were okay, but the negative vibes coming from the abandoned house were affecting the energy of his prospective property. We couldn't do anything about the other house because it had been abandoned and padlocked. I left it to him to decide.

A week later, Gabby sent me a basket of fruits with a note saying he decided not to buy the house, although it broke the heart of his wife, Sylvia, who really wanted it. I said I believed he made a very good decision and, in the long run, his wife would thank him for that.

Here's a last example. A real estate broker friend insisted on showing me some new projects they were offering. Although I was not in the market for such a venture, I went with her just to see.

Negative vibes

The property was located in Tagaytay City with a very nice mountain view. Upon entering the place, I felt some heaviness and negative energy in the entire area. She said that was just my imagination as she gave me a sales pitch describing how wonderful the place was and outlining the company's plans for the place. I couldn't see anything wrong with the place, as there were still no buildings or houses.

When we left the new subdivision, we took another route and I saw a cemetery located right at the back of the property. My friend said with a smile, "I really didn't tell you about the cemetery because I wanted to know if you would sense anything. Actually, we are having a difficult time selling the place."

Incidentally, somewhere in Tagaytay, also

INNER AWARENESS

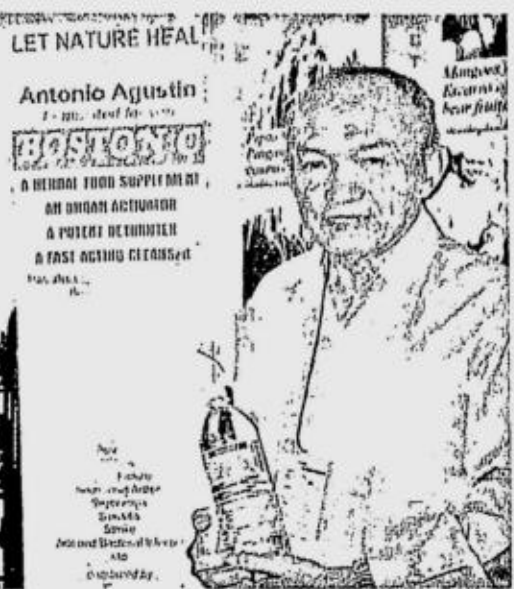


Jaime T. Licaucio

overlooking the Taal Lake, another subdivision was being opened with a beautiful view. The only problem was, electric power transmission lines cut across the property. These high tension wires emit deadly electromagnetic field radiation, which some studies have shown can cause leukemia and tumors among children, if they lived within 300 meters of the power lines.

These are only some of the unseen factors that must be considered before buying or leasing real estate. Western science may frown on these things, but we can ignore them only at great risk to our lives, health and wealth.

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicaucio@edsamail.com.ph. Visit my website at <http://j.licaucio.tripod.com>. Listen to my DZMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.



ENGINEER Clarence S. Salido (left) and lawyer Bert Salido show with samples of the nata de coco by-product, Boston C, at the SM Centerpoint Health Exhibit. The Vitamin-C enriched herbal food supplement is reported to be a highly potent organ activator and fast-acting cleanser. Call Caring Enterprises at (0917) 536-2273 or visit the Boston C showroom at 111 Kamias Road, QC.

Fresh Year Fresh Skin Promo

1 For a minimum P103 single receipt purchase of Facial Care and Toiletries products in all HBC Stores, you're entitled to draw once from the **Fresh Year Fresh Skin Lucky Bowl** - and get a chance to INSTANTLY win the following:

- FREE P200 worth Complete Facial Treatment Service Certificates* (Branches with Exclusive Service)
- FREE P100 worth HBC Gift Cheque (For those Branches without Exclusive Service)
- Body Recipe Eye Cream or Moisturizing Cream Products

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2 PLUS! If you buy BODY FACIAL CARE PRODUCTS, you're entitled to draw more than once.

Ex.: P103 purchase - Draw Once
P206 purchase - Draw Twice
P309 purchase - Draw Thrice

3 **ENJOY 10% DISCOUNT ON SELECTED**

BODY RECIPE Facial Care Products

4 PLUS! Free Facial

- For a min. P100 purchase of BODY RECIPE get a FACIAL MASSAGE & CLEANSING;
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Natural remedies in your kitchen

When thinking about medicine, most people will rush to their medicine cabinets filled with bottles. But there is another medicine chest whose wonders you have not explored—your kitchen.

The vegetables, herbs and spices you use every day and possibly take for granted can be great natural remedies. In fact, common items like carrots, onions and potatoes are also considered medicinal.

Modern medicine has successfully harvested the healing powers of raw plants as extracts, oils, powders and ointments. Bear in mind that most medication, both over-the-counter and prescrip-

tion, are either a synthetic reproduction or directly derived from plants.

With health care costs fast rising, it is good to know that you have alternative treatments within reach. While they may not completely replace or substitute for medical prescriptions given by doctors, they can be very useful in small emergencies.

When processed herbs are not available, find what you need in your kitchen. Some of the more popular spices and herbs with therapeutic effects are:

Virgin coconut oil. This aromatic oil, when applied to the skin, alleviates dryness, itching and flaking. New studies seem to indicate that it may rival garlic oil as a natural antibiotic. Processing for commercial use may be done

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino



soon.

Olive oil/almond oil. Great for skin inflammation and helps with kidney and bladder problems. Ten drops in hot water should be sufficient.

Basil. For stomach complaints, cramps and vomiting and nervous disorders, ½ tsp added to a cup of hot water gives relief.

Cayenne. It stops bleeding and fights infection and is good for sores, cuts and ulcers. To use, make a paste by mixing 1 tbsp of powder with water or vegetable oil then apply to injured area.

Cayenne powder applied on a problem tooth will help ease the pain.

Celery. A diuretic, it is also useful against rheumatism. Use by grating 1 tsp of fresh celery in 1 cup of hot water.

Cinnamon. To ease nausea, diarrhea, or colic, put ½ tsp. in hot water.

Cloves. A local antiseptic and anesthetic, ½ tsp clove powder should be used to make tea.

Ginger. The sweat-inducing spice is great for flu and colds. It also helps relieve menstrual cramps and tummy disorders. Put ¼ tsp in 1 cup hot water.

Garlic. For sprains, apply crushed garlic mixed with vegetable oil on the affected area. For hypertension, two raw cloves may be taken after a meal.

Onion. Aids in sleep and digestion. It may be taken by adding 1



ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

tsp of honey to ¼ tsp onion powder.

Salt. Excellent for inducing vomiting in cases of accidental poisoning by putting ½ tbsp of salt in a cup of warm water. Salt can also be used as nose drops to unclog nasal passages. Mix one pinch of salt in ¼ cup of warm water.

A healing visualization

Water has always been considered a potent healing agent.

The next time you bathe, imagine that your shower emits blue light as water drops. The light covers you and recharges you, making you feel energized and whole. Then affirm with "I am well."

Smile. Love and light!

WAKE UP!

TO A STABLE, HIGH-EARNING WAY
TO SAVE YOUR MONEY

The PHILAM FUNDS

As a member company of one of the largest and most diversified financial groups in the country, Philam Asset Management, Inc., is continuously looking for ways to use its billions of pesos in resources, the expertise of its professional staff, and its sincere mission of helping every Filipino live a better life. With The Philam Funds, we've succeeded in giving many hard-working, savings-conscious, future-oriented Filipinos a new and better way for their money to make more money.

The Philam Funds offer modern and smart ways to save or invest your hard-earned peso or dollar savings. They are mutual funds. It simply means that we gather individual savings or investments and invest them prudently as a group. Why? Because it usually takes a bigger amount or fund to get better earnings. Since no single average investor ever has enough money to invest for this purpose, 'mutual' funds are created in order to generate higher earnings for individuals and institutions. Imagine buying anything in bulk, you get discounts right? So the bigger the fund to invest, the more chances there are of getting the best deals and bigger earnings without compromising safety and security.

Our Peso Bond Fund earned 9.5% (net of taxes) in 2002 while the Dollar Bond Fund yielded 6.87% for the same period. For the more experienced and aggressive savers, we also have a balanced fund and a stock market fund.

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Lecture on holistic healing

A MODERN spiritual science of the human being, Anthroposophy, if used as a framework in medicine, offers a possibility to heal the inner/outer, material/spiritual divisions in one's personal life.

Anthroposophic medicine is derived from the work of Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) and Dr. Ita Wegman (1876-1943). Anthroposophy's aim is to stimulate the natural healing forces in a patient through a systematic process of inner self discovery, and the use of natural remedies and therapies.

For years now, medical practitioners have gathered in Europe to learn and disseminate information regarding anthroposophy. For the first time, the International Anthroposophic Medicine Seminar will be held in Mayridge, Good Shepherd Convent, Tagaytay City March 14-22.

Expert international lecturers are invited. Fees vary depending on professional category, but an early-bird discount is offered to registrants on or before Jan. 31.

Call Dr. Divina Hey-Gonzales or Riya Brigno Lopez at 928-5386, fax 412-3505 or e-mail heydoc@info.com.ph or alibata2k1@ed-samail.com.ph.

New acne treatment

RECENT studies in the Netherlands showed that hormonal therapy could be effective in preventing and even curing acne.

The study found that the use of a low-dosed bi-phasic pill like Gracial was effective in the treatment of mild to moderate acne. The longer the treatment, the more the skin improved.

Acne or pimples is a skin disorder caused by excess oil production that clogs the pores at the base of the hair follicles, especially on the face, back, chest and shoulders. Hormonal imbalance plays a role in the development of acne so restoring balance is necessary to cure the disorder.